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Vol. CLXX No. 2215 WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED THE GRAPHIC JULY 4 1942

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THE SPHERE
With which is incorporated "THE GRAPHIC"
The Empire's Illustrated Weekly

THE PRIME MINISTER RETURNS TO LONDON AFTER HIS CONFERENCES IN WASHINGTON: WITH MRS. CHURCHILL AND CORPORAL MARY CHURCHILL, of the A.T.S., on his arrival at Euston after a flight back across the Atlantic in the world's biggest flying-boat

On Saturday evening last, Mr. Winston Churchill arrived back in London after his conferences with President Roosevelt in Washington. His return trip, like his outward journey, was made by flying-boat—the huge "Bristol" of British Overseas Airways. The Prime Minister was met at Euston by a large party which included Mrs. Churchill; their daughter, Corporal Mary Churchill, of the A.T.S.; other members of his family; and a large gathering of political and diplomatic personages, including the Russian and Chinese Ambassadors. In this picture, taken at the terminus, the Prime Minister is seen in his famous naval peaked cap and reefer jacket. Behind may be glimpsed General Sir Alan Brooke, C.I.G.S., Lord Anderson and Mr. Clement Attlee

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A WAR NEWSLETTER —No. 148

1, NEW OXFORD STREET, W.C.1.

Tobruk — Reactions.—

Faced with the bare, bald fact that Tobruk had surrendered after a few hours of assault, with perhaps 25,000 troops and much new material inside the perimeters, the average man in my neighbourhood spilt fewer words than on any occasion I can recall. Was he stunned or was he wiser? Both, no doubt. It was a facer, and there has not been an event in this war fitter for silence, even from good words. But the chief reason for that grim silence was unquestionably the tardy revolt against words. We have been doped with words. I have never ceased to say so; never ceased to preach that the implication of that famous "What kind of people do they think we are?" has been least appreciated at home and in our own ranks. The character of the British race has throughout this war been, officially, shamefully under-estimated. Time after time a foolish rosy haze has been thrown over the battle-fronts. We have been suffered to live in dreams and to awake to a sudden and bitter disillusionment. And in this criminal conspiracy Ministers, Headquarter Staffs, war correspondents, amateur and professional strategists, and journalists are all implicated. We were stunned to silence during the grim silence which followed the news of Tobruk's fall from a sheer revolt against words. It was not the thought that here was another most untimely setback to our Army's confidence in itself, or to the nation's confidence in its Army commanders. It was not the thought of what Russia would think of it, or America, or, for that matter, South Africa. It was not the bitter realisation that another big batch of the output from our factories had gone unused into enemy hands or that another name must be added to the list of our Dunkirks. First and last, it was a final and utter revolt against talk, blather, wordy dope, *the human tongue* which has proved, time and again, the Enemy No. 1 of our war effort and of our national morale. Mr. Churchill's absence in America at this grave juncture was an added misfortune. We heard from those who had seen him since the news of Tobruk that he was "in very good spirits." We needed very badly to have the proofs of his long-view confidence supplied by his own voice. At the moment it was the only voice we could endure to hear.

Meanwhile, in America . . .

—But Mr. Churchill was otherwise engaged. He had been talking day and night with the President, and on June 23 we learned from a rosy communiqué released from Washington that complete understanding and harmony exist between all concerned; that vital details had been settled *viva voce* which would have wasted valuable months if discussed by the medium of correspondence; and that, though no hint could be disclosed of the nature of the joint plan of attack, "the earliest maximum concentration of allied war power" would be launched on the enemy. These are words—rosy words even. And we read them at a moment in the war when words mean least to us and are suspect because they *are* words, and vague, hand-picked words at that. In our reactions we must not go too far. Words are necessary in all but exceptionally small societies of human beings, to communicate ideas and orders. We must recognise the need for words under proper control, and occasions when words and even vague formulæ are necessary and proper. To the most disillusioned these formulæ may mean very little; to any surviving optimist of bulletins they may sound a *sursum corda*. I shall content myself by reading them and noting them and arguing that Mr. Churchill's visit to America was certainly desirable and (except for his absence from England at a critical time) apt; that much useful planning and agreement must have been reached and that the fruits of them would no doubt one day (bar untimely frosts) be seen. But I for one shall not read into them any glowing promise about peaks or Nazi climacterics or "back-breaking" or "end-sighting," or even a new front in 1942 to satisfy all the diverse ideas of what that term implies among the Allied new-front fans. I shall treat them as justifiable words issued under proper direction and control, signifying just so much and so little as the juncture justifies and as the ordinary man can expect to know. One thing only I read into them. That Mr. Churchill and the President have put Tobruk in its proper perspective and have kept their eyes on a wider horizon; have had to-morrow rather than to-day on their agenda; and have seen the war arena as a whole and have not avoided, under-estimated or exaggerated the innumerable and grievous snags which beset it.

WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS MEET TO ASSIST PRODUCTION IN FACTORIES AND SHIPYARDS

Representatives of workers and employers are now sitting side by side at production meetings to help the wartime output of our arms factories. Workers elect their own representatives to the committees, with the co-operation of Area District Councils formed by the Unions. These Councils receive regular reports from the committees, and take any steps necessary outside the factory to deal with obstructions to production. The above picture was taken whilst a meeting was in progress at a large factory in the southern counties: from left to right are the following—a representative from the Turning Department; Manager; Shop Manager; Milling Department representative; Foreman of the Training Centre; Chairman and Superintendent; Superintendent's secretary; Tool-room Manager; Jig Borer; Inspection representative; Foreman of Gun Turning; and a fitter

Pitt and Churchill: Ulm and Tobruk.

—We do not doubt that Tobruk lies heavy on Mr. Churchill's heart, but not as heavy as lay the capitulation of Ulm on Pitt's heart. The *situations* in these two world wars are just worthy of comparison. The condition of the two leaders was very different. Pitt was worn out in body and mind when the news of Ulm came to him. Churchill we believe to be in full vigour and heart, and still at the height of his powers. Pitt had not left to him *faith in to-morrow*; and the morrow *literally* brought him the news of Trafalgar. Churchill is an historian as well as a statesman and fighting leader. He has never in our darkest hours forgotten the redeeming possibilities of to-morrow which a study of History reveals. Nor will he; nor need we. Tobruk is no Austerlitz for Churchill. It is an Ulm only in its relation to to-morrow's Trafalgar. And on the long view even Austerlitz had its Waterloo. Let us keep our faith in to-morrow, our sense of proportion and our faith in our nation and our leader. He, at least, keeps faith in us and with us. No man born of woman is infallible. We can see to it that Churchill has made no mistake in reposing faith in us. I doubt not that he is seeing to it that all our tragic yesterdays and the bitter experience derived from them shall bear fruit in a decisive Trafalgar at no distant date when some of the causes of our failures in the past have been corrected.

The Conduct of the War.—

Writing before the debate on the conduct of the war and the Libyan debacle, I am moved to set forth with restraint the plain man's reasons for dreading (while admitting the necessity and justice of) this inquisition and test of confidence in the Government. The temper of the House and the nature of the Government's chief critics make it likely that the debate will wash a lot of dirty linen in public, and, by exposing or accentuating some of our weaknesses, give a larger handle to outspoken critics of England's effort and efficiency—a body not negligible in Russia, America and the Empire—an unpleasant fact to be reckoned with. Then, again, it is unfortunate that some of the chief critics in Parliament are men whose voices we have grown to detest, not so much for what they say (which is often sense) but for the way they say it. I have never concealed my opinion that Mr. Churchill has his hands too full, that he should have named a "successor," and that the roles of Premier and Defence Minister should be separated. I have never agreed with the "sheer logic" of the well-worn Government argument that you cannot support Churchill as Premier unless you support every member of his enormous and unlevel administration, and, by the way the by-elections are going, I fancy I am not alone in this, and that thousands of people in England also detest the "coupon" system, or "personal" letter of support for the Government candidate. Against these disquieting reflections, we must in justice set forth our belief that an alternative Government capable of conducting the war (substituting man for man in office for office) does not exist in Britain to-day, whether drawn from Parliament or from outside Parliamentary circles. Holding this view, we see the ineffectuality of a bid to test the public's confidence in the Government by critics who themselves are incapable (in our view) of replacing the existing administration from among their own ranks or from outside. On the other hand, we support the critics in their belief in the need for a critical debate at this juncture, and following this latest failure of our arms, and also in their fight for a strengthening of the Government by the liquidation of notorious weak links. Mr. Churchill must this time surely accept the truth, the hard fact, of public opinion in the third year of war, and bow to the people's will, as a big man and a great Parliamentarian can do, and must do. He is the Premier and leader for our money still. He is trying to do too much, and must delegate the Defence Ministry into other and expert hands. He must realise that loyalty to colleagues, noble virtue as it is, cannot any longer be placed above loyalty to country and cause, and that there are still glaring weaknesses in his Government which must be remedied, and weak links which must be replaced. When these lines are printed, we shall know the worst or the best.

Social Service — for the Duration?

—A reader has written to me: "In your Newsletter 144 you say: 'In many ways peace is more dangerous for Britons than war.' I would like to pay my tribute to that observation, which is well proved by facts." He argues back from the so-called peace of the years between wars, when our material code was based on a policy of self before service, and possessions before character. The war changed much of that. It brought into being many organisations designed to help one's neighbours. Some were forced upon us for the duration of danger from enemy action, such as A.R.P. But others, such as the Women's Voluntary Aid and Citizens' Advice Bureaux services, are clearly designed to survive, and should have been in active existence years ago in a Christian community. The writer asks my advice and assistance as to the best means of assuring the continuation beyond the war of such social services as the W.V.S. and the C.A.B. His letter comes at one of those inevitable and frequent reactions from wishful thinking which have tragically marked the progress of this war. The end once more seems far off. Our chickens have still to be hatched, the war to be won. In such reactions, we look with less favour and confidence on post-war planning and peace organisation. But we are as wrong-headed in our despondent moods as in our easy moods of optimism. A sense of proportion, a broad view of the war, a just perspective of the implications of local success and failure, of ups and downs. These things must be striven for. When the hill before us seems longest and steepest, when the night seems darkest, that is the fittest of all moments in which to prepare for action when the light comes and the crest is attained; and I for one cannot believe that those who now direct such social organisations contemplate that with the coming of peace they will lay aside their services to their fellow-men as they will lay aside their gas-masks and black-out curtains. *Because*, though the peace cannot be made safe until the war is won, neither can the war be won beyond doubt until the peace which follows it is secured beyond question.

THE OLD STAGER

ONE OF THE SHOTS FROM THE FILM, taken at the time the South African forces went into action at Sidi Rezegh. Here is the scene as a member of the crew of an enemy tank emerged from his vehicle and surrendered to the South African officer on the right

The Film of the LIBYAN FIGHTING

"Historic Record," Taken on the Battlefield Near Sidi Rezegh in November 1941

The film *Historic Record* was taken on the battlefield near Sidi Rezegh in November 1941 by a brave cameraman—Errol Hinds, Staff Cameraman of the South African Bureau of Information. When it became obvious that he would be captured by the enemy, Mr. Hinds had the presence of mind to bury his films near a beacon in the desert. A medical orderly helped him to conceal them together with other things. Mr. Hinds and the orderly went as prisoners of war to Benghazi. There they became separated, but Mr. Hinds was able to tell a fellow-prisoner, Major Bordman, of the South African Irish, what he had done, and mentioned that a medical orderly would be able to say where they had been buried. Fortunately, both Major Bordman and the medical orderly were rescued when our forces entered Benghazi some weeks later. Mr. Hinds had, in the meantime, been taken to Italy as a prisoner of war. Major Bordman went in search of the orderly, and he was eventually located in a Cairo hospital, taken to Sidi Rezegh, and there the buried films were found. *Historic Record* tells the story of the advance into action from Sidi Rezegh of the 1st South African Division. It recalls episodes in the fight, but the film story comes to an abrupt end on the eve of the great German tank assault upon the 5th Brigade at Sidi Rezegh. In this fighting Errol Hinds showed high courage. He was last seen photographing the advancing German tanks with his camera

AFTER A COMBAT IN THE DESERT THIS SOLDIER CAME FORWARD, ARMS IN THE AIR: The film "Historic Record" was taken by a cameraman who is now a prisoner in Italy: he was able to hide his film in the desert before capture and it was subsequently successfully located

HOW TOBRUK FELL

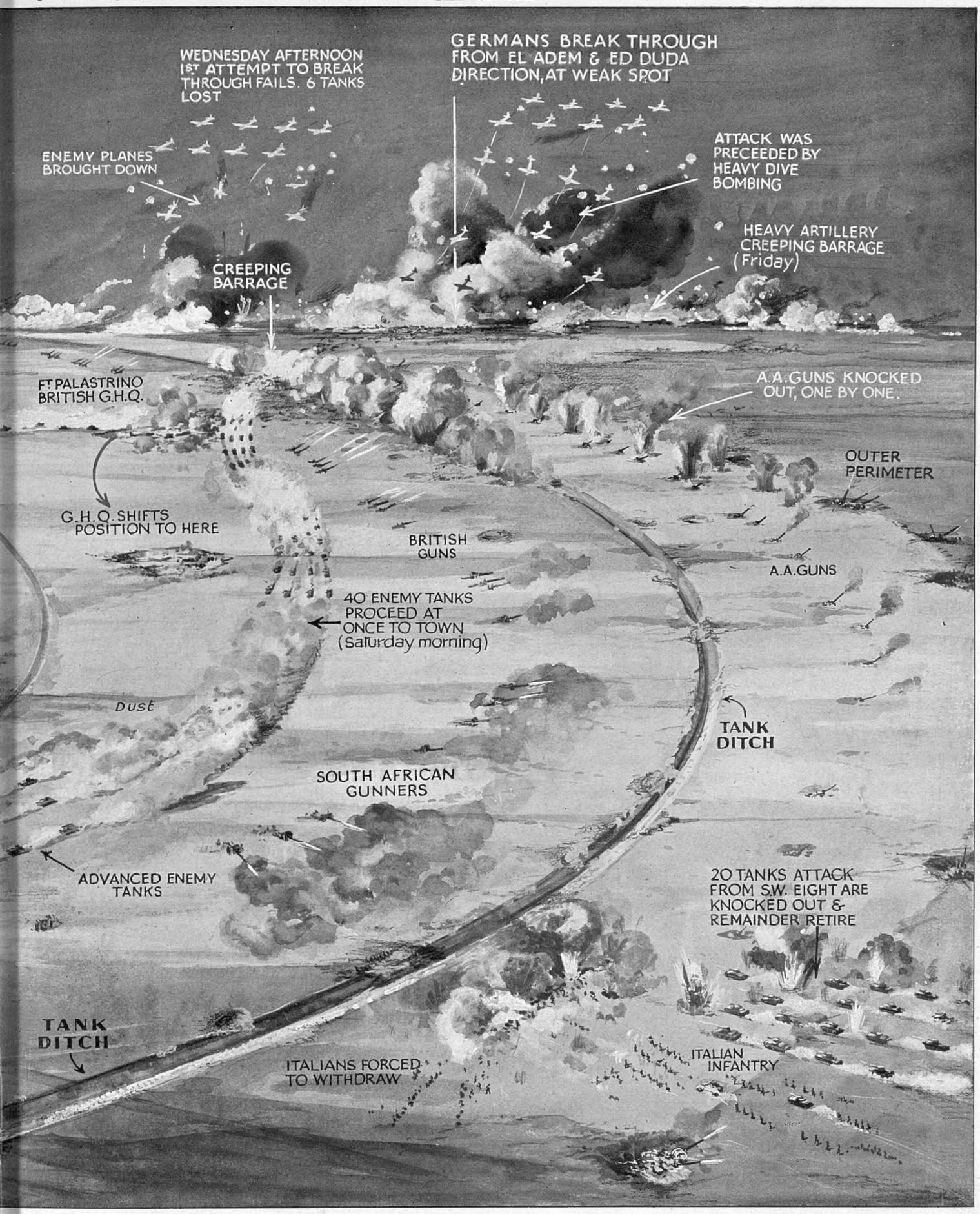
A Diagrammatic Exposition of the Events from Wednesday to Sunday, June 17 to 21, when the Local Commander Surrendered to the German General Rommel

"The fall of Tobruk and a large portion of its garrison is a heavy and unexpected blow."—General Auchinleck

A SPECIAL "SPHERE" DRAWING BY E. G. LAMBERT

HOW Tobruk Fell

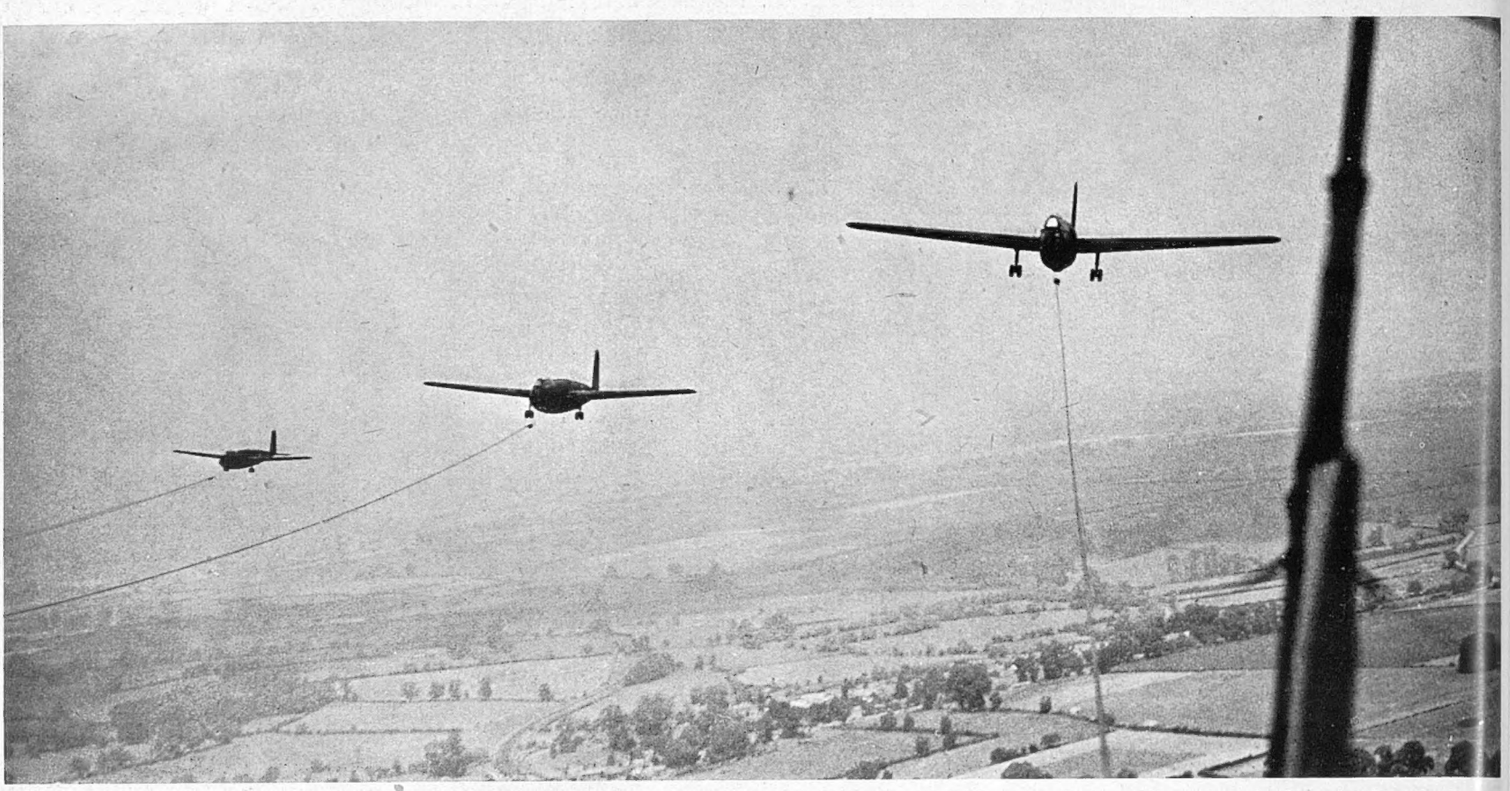
After Rommel had attacked the British fortified lines stretching south of El Gazala on May 28 and rounded the southernmost positions, he turned northwards; it is now evident that Tobruk was his immediate goal. But it was not until three weeks later that he was in a position to launch a typically German concentration. By this time Rommel had worked round to the east, advancing from El Duda. It would appear that a tentative trial of the defences at this point was made as early as Wednesday, June 17, when a certain number of dive-bombers appeared, together with an advanced tank force. Indian troops drove these off with a loss of six enemy tanks. The 18th passed with more or less continuous, but not excessive bombing from the air: but on Friday, the 19th, the German artillery opened up a heavy barrage against the Tobruk headquarters at Fort Palestrino, the strong point within the outer defence lines. During that night the first demolition of stores began. It was not until Saturday, June 20, that the main concentrated attack began. Clouds of dive-bombers appeared over the high ground and attacked the British anti-aircraft



positions. Soon a heavy creeping barrage opened up from the assembled artillery. After the artillery preparation a force of tanks, probably about fifty in number, burst through the defence lines. A few apparently deviated across the stony area which borders the southern side of the harbour and opened fire on some vessels which were endeavouring to make their way out to sea. The main body pressed on. At about the same time an attack was made upon the western side of the defences by a force of some twenty tanks against the position held by the South Africans. Swinging their guns towards the new attack, the South Africans forced the Italians to retire with speed. They themselves, it appears, withdrew into the town when it became apparent that the encircling lines and the tank ditch had all been pierced by the enemy. To meet the onrush towards Tobruk, there were only administrative troops to man the hastily-assembled road-blocks. Such forces as were gathered within the town area put up a stubborn defence as the day wore on. During the night the South African gunners plastered all the approaches, but the enemy succeeded in infiltrating house by house. Down on the harbour front were a number of jetties constructed by the Italians in their endeavours to turn Tobruk into a useful naval base. Here some heroic demolition work had been carried out by R.A.S.C. officers and men and others. Naval forces had been embarked a little earlier; and during the later stages of the fighting two South African minesweepers, including the Palktown, *and a British tug were waiting to take off final demolition parties. A terrific barrage was laid by the enemy across the harbour at the position of the boom defence, and the few vessels which got away to sea had miraculous escapes. All during the fatal Saturday Tobruk Headquarters had been keeping in touch with the 8th Army. It was not until Sunday morning that the final message, intimating the surrender of Tobruk, reached General Ritchie. The Commander of the garrison had called together all the available officers and men and had informed them of his proposal to surrender the position. Those who wished to try and break out were at liberty to do so. A few succeeded in reaching the 8th Army, as we have already learned.*

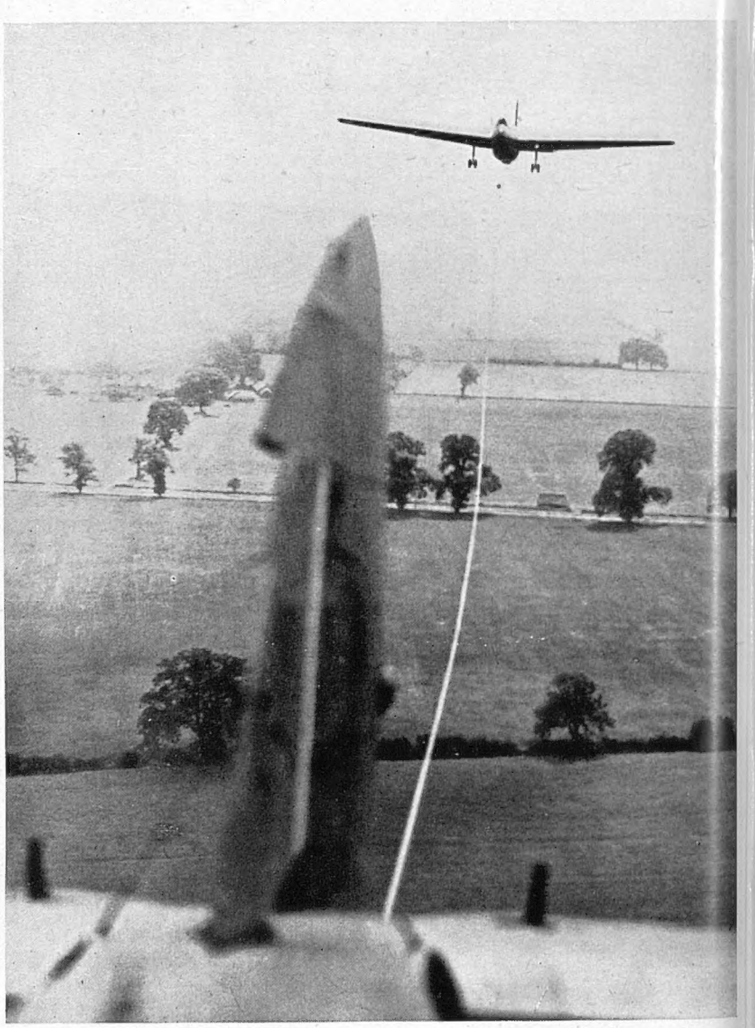
GLIDER PILOTS of the ARMY:

The First Official Pictures of the Manner in which Men are being Trained to Handle the Thousands of New Gliders now being Built in Britain for Operation by Army Pilots



ARMY GLIDERS IN FULL FLIGHT, SHOWING THE MANNER IN WHICH THEY ARE TOWED BY POWERED AIRCRAFT: It will be noticed that the front landing-wheels are fixed to the wings and are non-retractable; the body is completely enclosed; the wing-span is much greater than that of an ordinary aeroplane, and the wings are square at the tips. The tail-fin stands very characteristically high

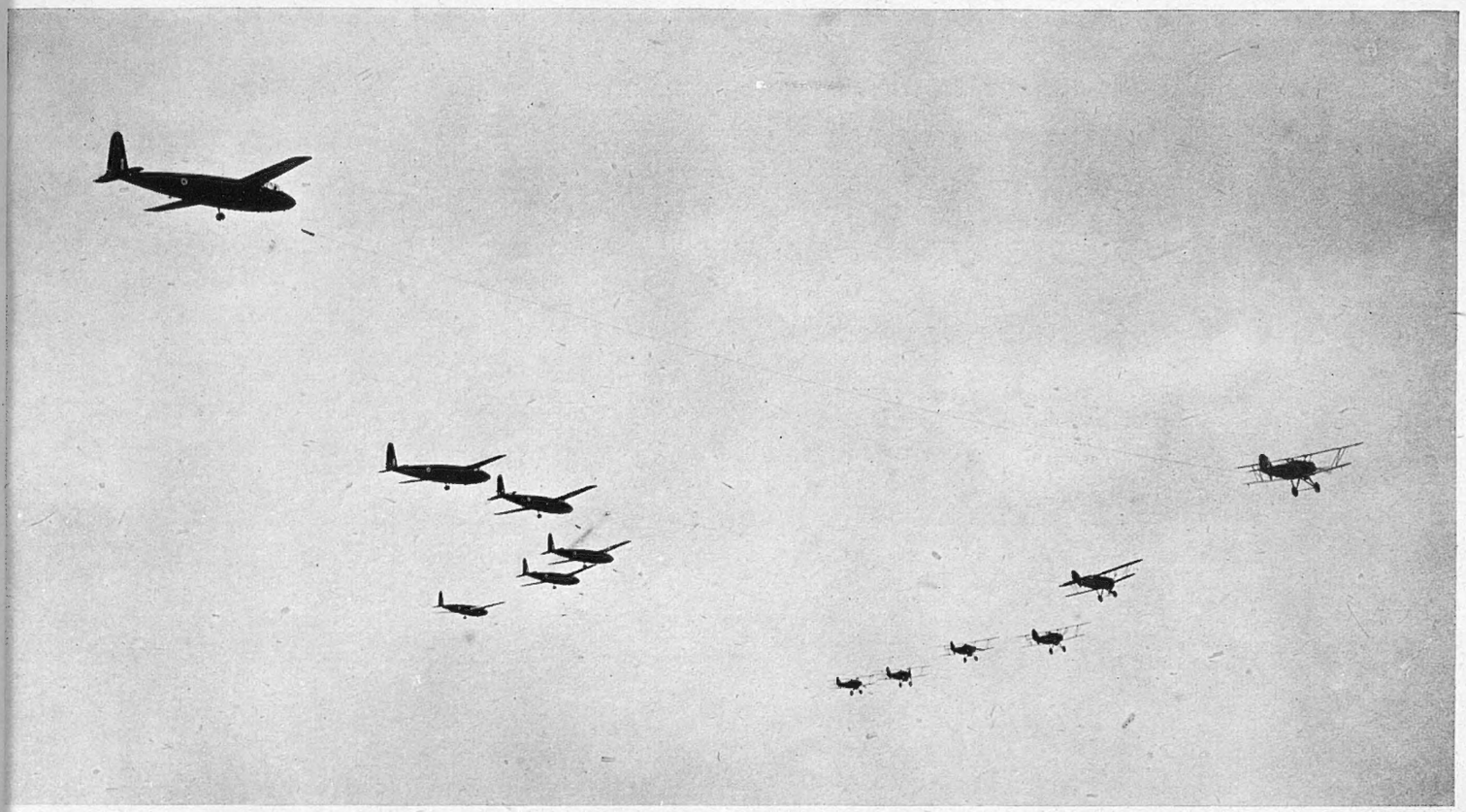
THE GLIDER NEARS ITS DESTINATION: Once it becomes air-borne, it does not reduce the towing aircraft's speed very materially, as the glider provides its own "lift" and its body is fully streamlined



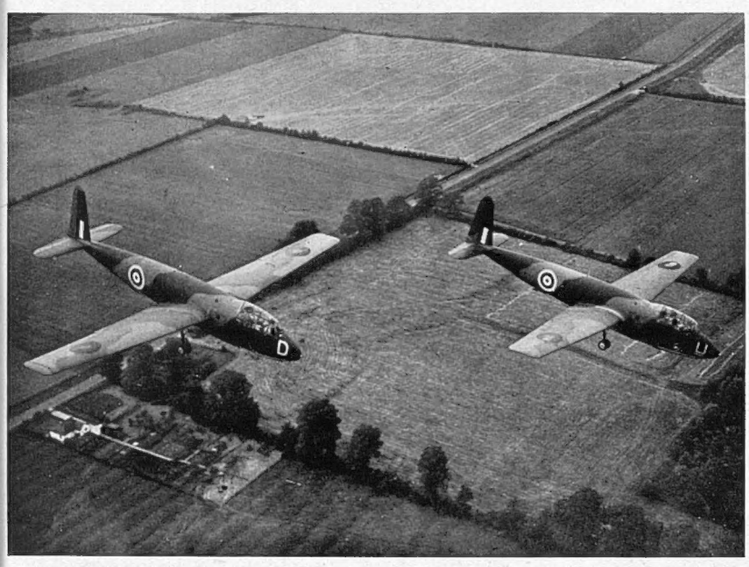
READY TO BE CAST OFF: As it nears the objective, the glider is released to plane down by itself. Its landing-speed is comparatively low, and the actual landing is not a difficult task, provided no enemy aircraft are in the vicinity

It was made public some little time ago that air-borne troops were to be trained by the Army. The pictures reproduced here—the first to be officially released for publication—show some of the progress made in this respect in the comparatively short space of time since the first announcements were made. Thousands of these easily-built gliders are now being constructed in this country, and the troops are being trained to fly them. The men selected by the Army are given preliminary instruction in powered aircraft: they are then taught to pilot the towed gliders. In a few weeks they are taught to take off, fly and land gliders of all descriptions which may be used to transport troops or equipment.

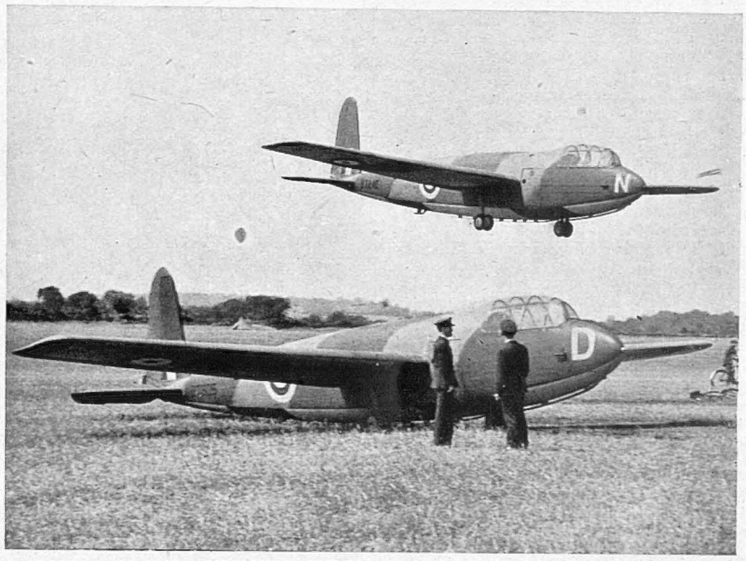
The pictures reproduced were all taken a few days ago at the "Preliminary Glider Pilot Establishment," where the first steps are taken to familiarise pilots in the use of gliders. The training is conducted by the Royal Air Force; the towing aircraft are Hawker Hectors (biplanes which are well suited to this specialised task); and the gliders are Hotspurs. If a group of gliders were all landed within a given area, they would form a very powerful attacking force. The training now forms an important part of Military Co-operation work, and the Army is rapidly building up a formidable gliding force. One of the trickiest parts of the elementary training is "formation flying" while being towed



HAWKER "HECTOR" AIRCRAFT TOWING THE NEW "HOTSPUR" GLIDERS IN FORMATION: This formation flying whilst being towed is one of the trickiest parts of the elementary training. Its value during actual operations against the enemy lies in the fact that by this means quite a strong force of air-borne troops can be landed within a very small area and thus present a stiffer problem for the defenders of the strong point under attack



TROOP-CARRYING GLIDERS COMING IN TO MAKE A SILENT LANDING after having been cast off from the towing "Hectors." These two machines are keeping close formation nicely on the way down



A CLOSE-UP OF THE "HOTSPUR" GLIDER, which shows the fully-enclosed cockpit, the upstanding fin, the landing-wheels and the tail-skid. Inside are instructor and pupil and six men (or the equivalent ballast)

THOUSANDS OF "HOTSPUR" GLIDERS ARE NOW BEING BUILT: Here are a few of them lined up for instructional purposes on the aerodrome. The method of entry for the troops is by way of the full-size door on the starboard side. The pictures on these pages were all taken a few days ago at the "Preliminary Glider Pilot Establishment," when the training methods were demonstrated by the Army

THE "LATIN BLOC" IDEA COMES UP AGAIN

The Laval-Franco-Mussolini Scheme for Combining Forces in the Mediterranean and Establishing Zones of Influence In and Around the Inland Sea after We have been Ousted from Gibraltar, Malta and Other Key Positions

Described by FERDINAND TUOHY

OUR worsened position in the Mediterranean automatically heightened the hopes of those who are intriguing for a Fascist Latin Bloc in that sea. Realisation of the policy is contingent upon, or presupposes, Britain's exit from the Mediterranean. Thus only might adequate pickings be made available, in the absence of which the Bloc could scarcely be coaxed into being. The gulfs, jealousies or differences existing between the three Fascist regimes of Madrid, Vichy and Rome can be bridged only by pickings and swoppings, and the swoppings are impossible without firstly the pickings—at Britain's expense.

No doubt more pressing questions, like that of taking an actual hand in operations should the Germans reach the Suez, were discussed by Suner and Mussolini as the British Army fell back on Egypt; and also by Mussolini and Laval's Lagardelle (the Frenchman Mussolini least objects to); but it would be surprising if these discussions did not extend to "a tour of the horizon" hypothecating a Fascist Latin Bloc in the Mediterranean.

The Bloc could be made to fit two sets of circumstances, say its exponents. Firstly, in the event of a German victory. While acquiescing in the New Order under German leadership, the Fascist Governments of Franco, Pétain, and Victor Emmanuel might, by showing solidarity in Western Europe, aspire to put a brake on German swarming in their latitudes, might hope to shield themselves from the *Herrenvolk* more effectively than if each faced Germany separately. Germany would have all Europe to organise, and could hardly afford to ride roughshod over a Bloc representing (excuse the word) joint populations totalling 120,000,000; she would not have so many friends that she could afford to queer a zoning policy of three fellow-Fascists in the Mediterranean. But they would have to be three together, or they'd be gourmandised piecemeal.

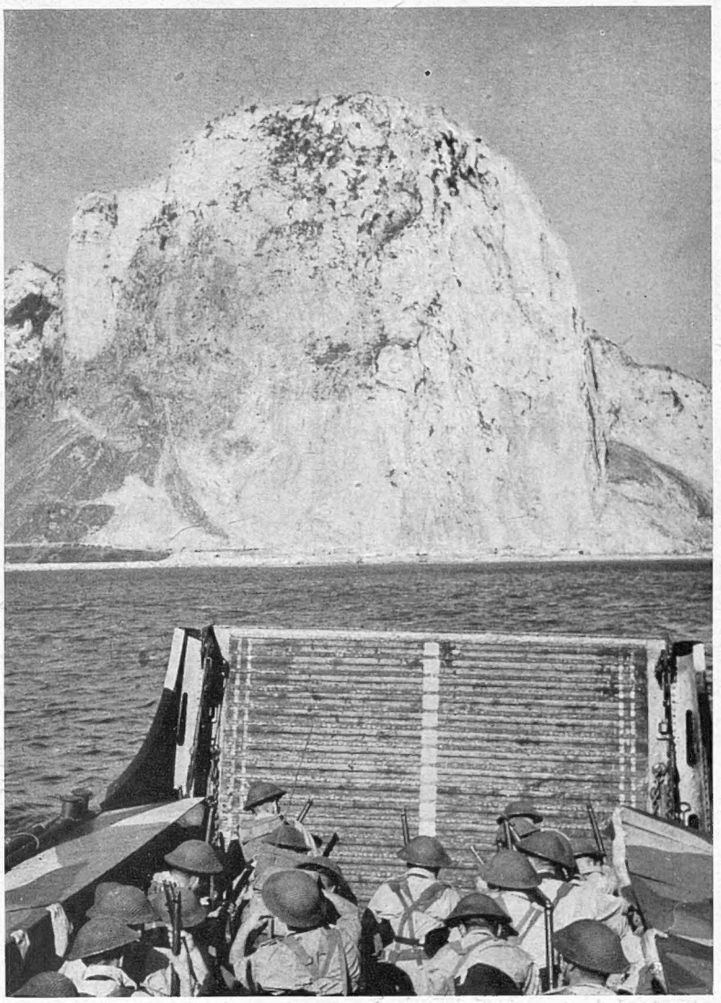
The second alternative might be more satisfactory in the long run. In the event of stalemate leading to a negotiated peace, the Bloc might hope to stand up, not only to Germany, but to the United Nations too. Crowning consideration, the Fascist system of rule would be preserved in the three capitals.

At this juncture the keenest exponent of the Bloc is Pierre Laval, backed to the hilt by Pétain in this particular matter, and also by Darlan, who is still head of the armed forces. The only real point of contact between Pétain and Laval is this Latin Bloc idea. Pétain has for years believed in a Mediterranean Fascist union of Paris, Rome and Madrid, which is the chief reason he has kept in such close relations with Franco and the Vatican. And he knows that, for once, Laval is sincerely and wholly devoted to a like idea. Laval was sketching his Latin Bloc idea before this war, so there is no soothsaying in an appreciation of his views something on these lines:

If Italy obtains Malta, the Holy Land, and representation in an Egyptian Condominium, and, of course, at the same time gets back all her colonies, she will overlook her claims on Nice and Savoy, Tunis and Corsica. This would allow German hegemony in Syria and Egypt. Similarly, if Spain is accorded Gibraltar, and is given primacy in Tangiers and a certain widening of her Moroccan holding at France's expense, she will overlook her plan to absorb all French Morocco and even the Algerian province of Oran (which was Spanish for 300 years). Laval feels he's the cat's whiskers in doing deals and in buying people off, and when, as in this case, his efforts are directed against his *bête noir, Angleterre*, there is added impulse.

Laval's pet argument, particularly for American listeners, is that Britain has no more right in the Latin Sea than would have French, Italians or Spaniards in the islands round Scotland; and he follows this by the "material consideration" that, in the years immediately ahead, places like Malta and Gibraltar, even Alexandria, will rapidly recede in importance as bases, due to the arrival of air fleets and great transport aircraft; that Gibraltar, Malta, etc., would accordingly be of dwindled use to Britain anyway, but that they would provide "constant affronts" and therefore be "potential causes of strife" as long as they were allowed to remain in British hands for what would, in the new circumstances, be little more than prestige reasons.

If Suner and Mussolini have not been listening to Laval as much as they have to one another, it would be a false interpretation to suggest that humbled and corded Vichy can exert no influence. Laval is already taking a notable part on the Axis side. By placing so much of the mercantile marine at Axis disposal, by driving French workers in their scores of thousands to German factories, by turning out arms for Germany night and day, by keeping the Allies out of French West and North Africa and by allowing facilities to the Axis in these territories, Laval is helping much more than is Spain. Even the equivocal bearing of the French Fleet can be made to advance his Latin Bloc obsession. I believe he would be prepared to go to the length of yielding Tunis first; and, if Mussolini insisted, Corsica too (but no more) if by so doing he could realise his Mediterranean policy.



AN UNUSUAL VIEW OF THE GREAT ROCK OF GIBRALTAR, showing the steepness of the rocky cliff at one of its faces. A picture taken during Commando practice by troops of the garrison

It doesn't look at the moment as if Fascist Spain is inclined to be drawn into any Latin Bloc. Looking south-westwards and away from all save the western entrance to the Mediterranean, Fascist Spain would prefer to be as much alone as possible in so far as her neighbours of the Latin Sea are concerned. Suner explained to Mussolini Spain's non-participation in the war, and Mussolini "perfectly understood." Fascist Spain's hope is that, by backing the New Order now, and by "rooting" for Hitler all the time, Germany will in return benevolently aid and watch totalitarian Spanish dominion spread over French Morocco and Oran, and away across the ocean to South America. "Here," orates Franco, "are the rules of my policy: Love for the people of America (South); integrity of the national territory; living space for Spain."

"We hold in our hands a drum which we know how to beat," says General Aranda. "It is simply a question of living. The Spanish zone in Morocco, peopled three times as densely as French Morocco, has a food production only one-twenty-fifth its neighbour's." Fascist Spain is "grooming" the "Caliph of Tetuan" as future Sultan of all Morocco, in place of Sidi Mohammed, "the bird kept in a cage by the French." That is why the Caliph, otherwise Muleh Hassan, former representative of Sidi in the Spanish zone, has been royally fêted in Madrid.

The Nazi Government expressly says it backs Franco's claims on Tangiers and Morocco. But there exist important currents in Spain, which would abstain from committing the country to Germany's protective offices. These currents are notably influenced by the Vatican, and they would expand in ratio to German discomfiture in the war. In that event, it might not be difficult to win these elements to a Latin Bloc if this preserved the Fascist regime. Incidentally—or not so incidentally—the Vatican is in favour of the Bloc as a local rampart against Wotan and atheistic, "godless" Communism.

This religious aspect of the policy of the Fascist Latin Bloc in the Mediterranean might be kept in the forefront of our reflections. The Church hierarchies in Spain, France and Italy can safely be written down as favouring, if not as activating it whenever they can, and we know how the three dictatorships in these countries find it expedient to humour their hierarchies in order to secure prestige and cover for their political activities. Franco and Pétain, in particular, show themselves aware of the support they can obtain by playing the religious card.

Of Mussolini's reactions to the Bloc idea, it is even more difficult to write than in the case of Spain, since we have to do with an out-and-out gambler posturing on swiftly-shifting sands. As the founder of Fascism, the "conqueror" of France and the "rescuer" of Spain, he assuredly sees himself in no other situation than as chief of any Mediterranean Bloc that should ever arise. But obviously his attitude to the whole idea must change with the ebb and flow of the war.

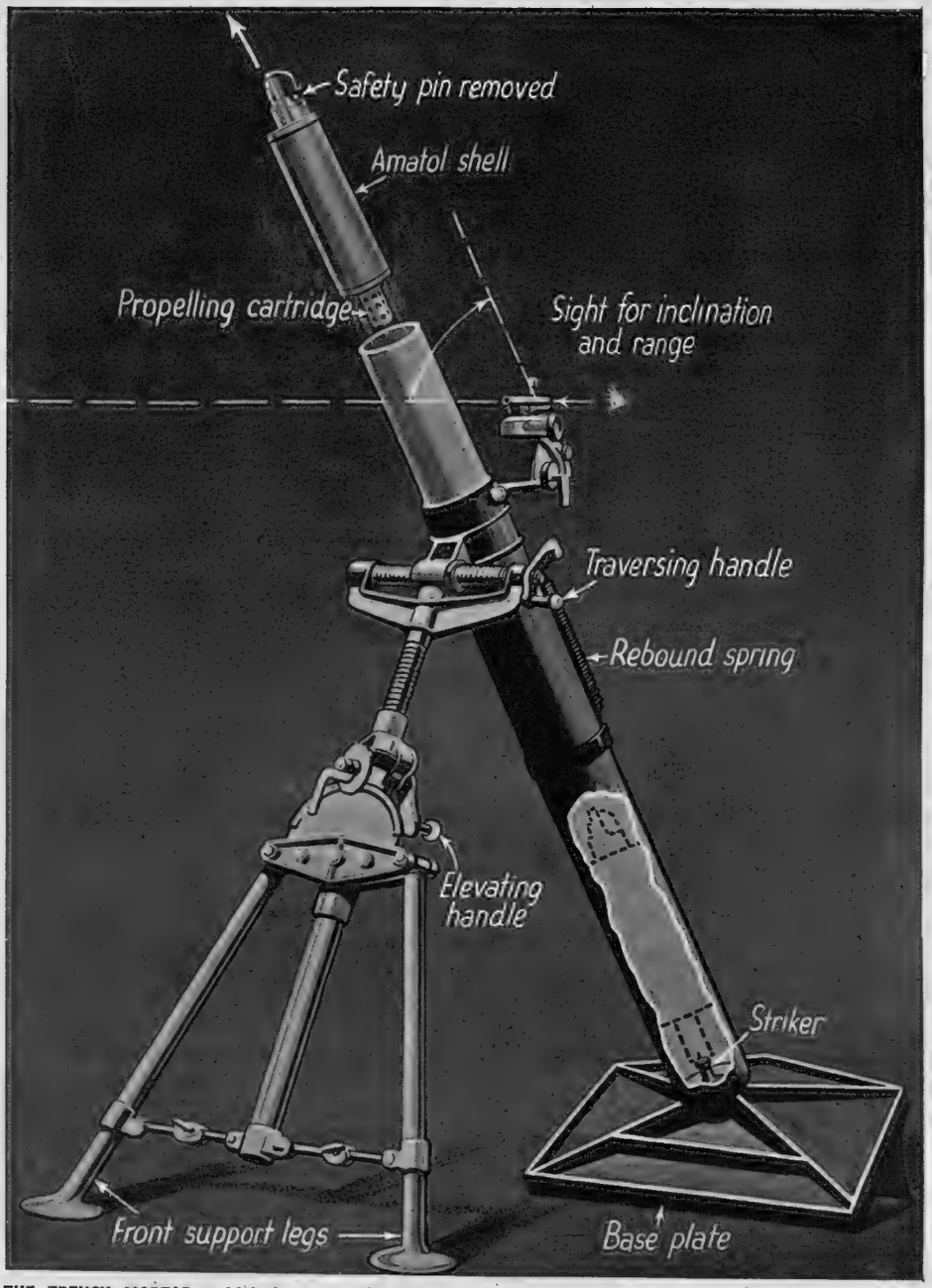
When things are going badly for his German master, the value of the Bloc as an escape from Nazi contamination and overlordship cannot fail to have its appeal. When, on the other hand, Axis hopes run high in the Mediterranean, as they do at this writing, Mussolini must be correspondingly determined to come out as head Latin of the Mediterranean, untrammelled by swoppings and pickings and pacts and dovetailing of interests, geographical, financial and economic, with countries like Spain and France, which have not stood by Hitler as he has done since 1937. (By the way, I hope my readers will remember a recent article suggesting that we should stop deriding Italy as no longer worth much consideration as a military force capable of affecting the outcome of the war. Rommel depended considerably on Italian aid of every description!)

To sum up, then, the fortunes of the policy of the Latin Bloc are currently at the mercy of war developments, but all the time men influentially placed in the three countries concerned are working below the surface. Men we never hear of. Others we do hear of, and as an example of the latent force in this idea or policy, take the intervention of Suner in Italy, with King, Duce and Vatican, to the end that Mussolini should desist with his strident claims for Corsica, Tunis, etc. That sort of thing would upset any chance of Mediterranean Fascists pulling together, as they might well need to do one day. Before Suner intervened, there had been close confabulation between Pétain and Franco, via the two Ambassadors, Piétri, in Madrid, and Lequerica, in Vichy. Piétri and Lequerica are in the forefront of workers for the policy.

This includes a special desire to impress the United States, no doubt with a view to any favourable reaction becoming communicated to Latin America. The desire is to show America the "orderliness" and "justice" of the policy. That it would enthrone regimes of a type and texture condemned by most Americans is not thought to be fatal. In the words of an American not long back from Vichy: "They reckon we Americans put the Nazis in a class by themselves and that we recognise Mediterranean Fascists to be another story altogether."

A natural appreciation in this country of the idea of a Latin Bloc in the Mediterranean is that, if Germany won, she'd foist herself on the lot and let them like it, and that the Latin "sisters" would live to rue the day they ousted the tolerant British, only to let in the insistently-present Nazis; furthermore, that, as there is not going to be a negotiated peace, the second part of the argument is so much poppycock. It does no harm to note that the chief hope of not a few important adherents of the Latin Bloc policy is for a negotiated peace.

TWO IMPORTANT WEAPONS in the BRITISH ARMOURY



THE TRENCH MORTAR, which has come into its own in the present war. This is the British model, a highly-finished weapon, which throws a type of rocket-bomb—*Drawing by L. Ashwell Wood*

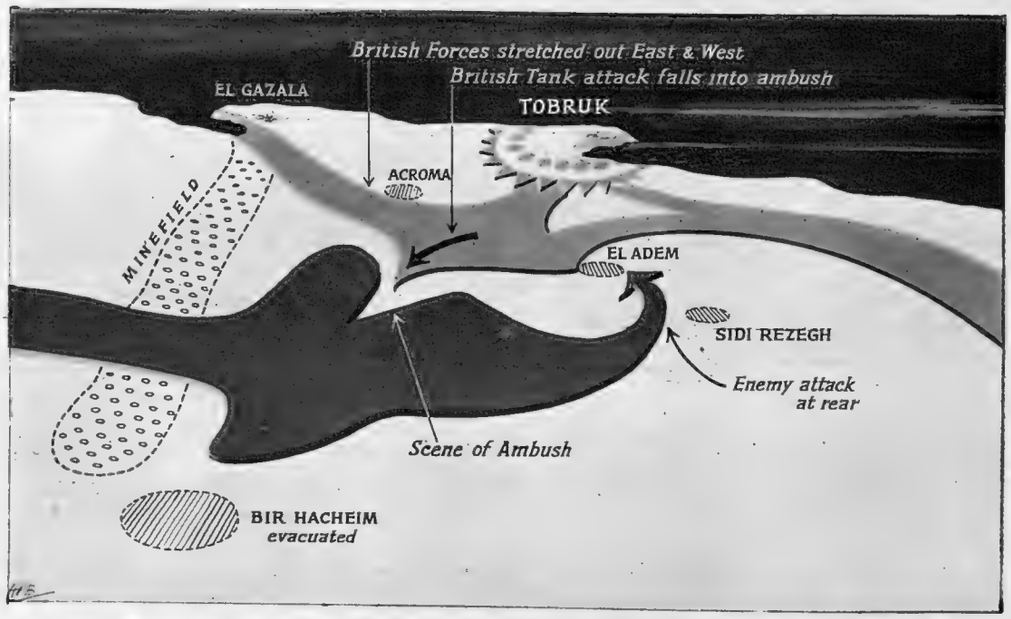
THE "ROCKET"-BOMB THROWN BY THE TRENCH MORTAR: The charge is lashed between the tail fins, it will be observed. It was in Russia and in Malaya that the trench mortar was singled out for attention by the war correspondents on the spot. But long before the Russian and Japanese infantry made such good use of it, the British weapon had already been developed into a fine instrument of warfare: recently it has been used with effect in the Libyan fighting. The mortar is a very simple weapon—but a very deadly one: it is intended for close-range bombardment and is generally used from trenches or behind cover. In Malaya the Japs used it to lob bombs over quite high trees to the British forces behind and out of sight. When the safety-pins are withdrawn, the shell, or bomb, is dropped down the barrel. The cartridge at the base is then exploded by impact with the striker at the bottom of the mortar barrel, and the shell is then driven out. The range is adjusted by elevating or depressing the barrel. The British type of trench mortar is about 4 ft. in height. In the drawing *on the left* the principal features of the mortar's construction are shown: the picture *above*, from Libya, shows how the charge is affixed to the tail of the shell

TWO PICTURES OF THE NEW "STEN" GUN, now being issued to the Home Guard and dubbed by them the "Woolworth Tommy-gun," owing to its cheapness of construction: The Home Guard like their new Sten automatic guns, which are now being issued in large quantities. It is an easily-handled short-range weapon, well balanced, which will greatly improve the fire power of the Force. The "Sten" can be manufactured so cheaply and quickly that it has come to be known as the "Woolworth Tommy-gun." It can fire farther than a tommy-gun, but (owing to the extreme simplicity of its design) it is far easier to manufacture and produce in mass. It can fire any small-calibre ammunition of British, American, German and Italian make. It weighs 6½ lb. and the magazine holds thirty-two rounds. The trigger control permits either a single shot, or a burst at the rate of over 500 a minute. The general appearance of the gun is shown in the *above* picture; that *on the right* shows the very few parts of which the gun is composed

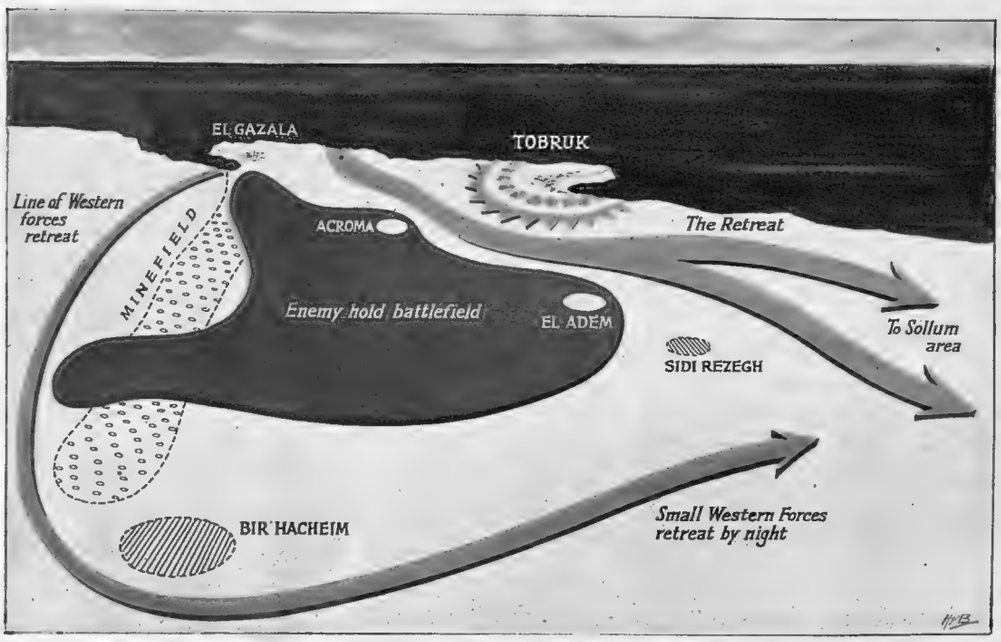
THE FALL OF TOBRUK

The Factors which Contributed to this Serious Reverse: And the Retreat Back to the Egyptian Frontier

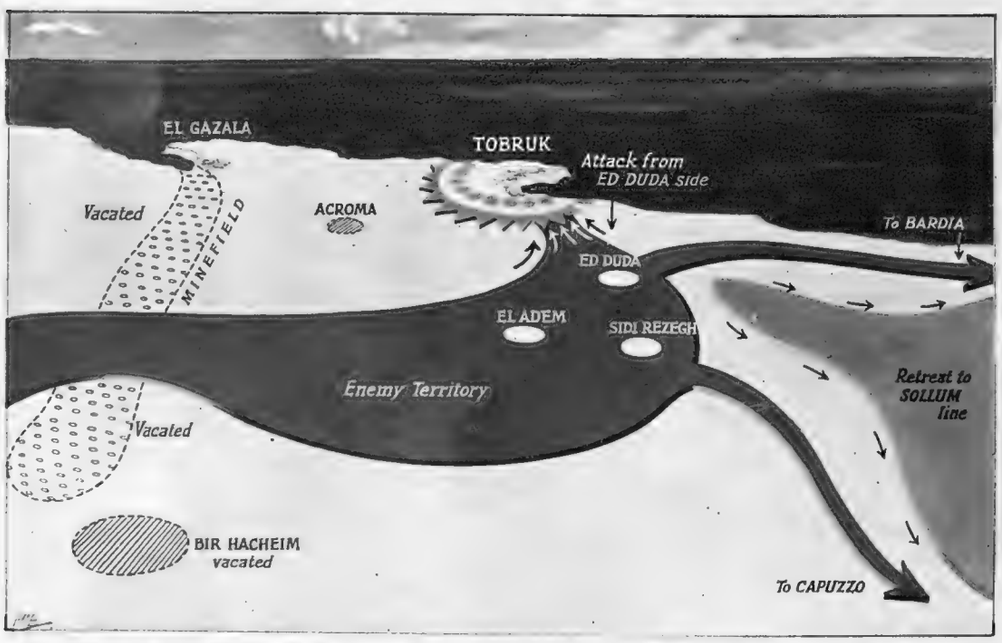
—With Special Sphere diagram-drawings



1. AFTER THE EVACUATION OF BIR HACHEIM, the German forces swept round to El Adem. Beaten off here, the 8th Army then pushed forward to the south of Acroma—and walked right into a trap which seriously reduced our tank strength. Thereafter, it became inevitable that we should have to withdraw—and quickly. At this stage, however, it was not anticipated that Tobruk would be seriously threatened



2. HAVING BEEN SERIOUSLY WEAKENED AS A RESULT OF OUR HEAVY TANK LOSSES, General Ritchie fell back from El Gazala and retreated eastwards in two columns, one of which swept round to the south in the manner indicated here. The enemy were now left in possession of the old battlefield, and were thus very well placed for an attack in strength on the fortress of Tobruk itself



3. TOBRUK WAS NOW COMPLETELY ISOLATED and its defences manned by a force said to have a strength of some 25,000. As the bulk of the 8th Army retreated to the frontier, General Rommel (after reconnaissance of our strength) swung round from the south-east—Ed Duda and Sidi Rezegh—and launched his shattering attack on Tobruk. As a result, the town fell to the enemy on June 21

To understand fully what has happened in Libya during the past few weeks, it is necessary to review briefly the former major operations which took place within this area. It will be recalled that, in September 1940, Italy advanced into Egypt and took up a position on which she remained for two months.

Then General Wavell struck at the complacent Italian Army on December 11 and overran the whole of Cyrenaica, reaching El Agheila on February 8, 1941. With only 30,000 men, Wavell succeeded in capturing 160,000 prisoners! But at that moment Greece was in need of help, and this had to come from General Wavell's victorious army. Germany seized the opportunity to reinforce her ally, and General Rommel first appeared on the scene with rapidly-assembled reinforcements. The German-Italian forces pressed our depleted army back as far as Sollum, but Tobruk was held as a garrison on the Axis' left flank.

All through the months from March to November 1941 Tobruk held out; on November 18 General Auchinleck launched his surprise attack on the German forces, but his first onslaught was hampered by an excessively heavy rainfall, which may have prevented that rapid movement which might have ensured an immediate victory.

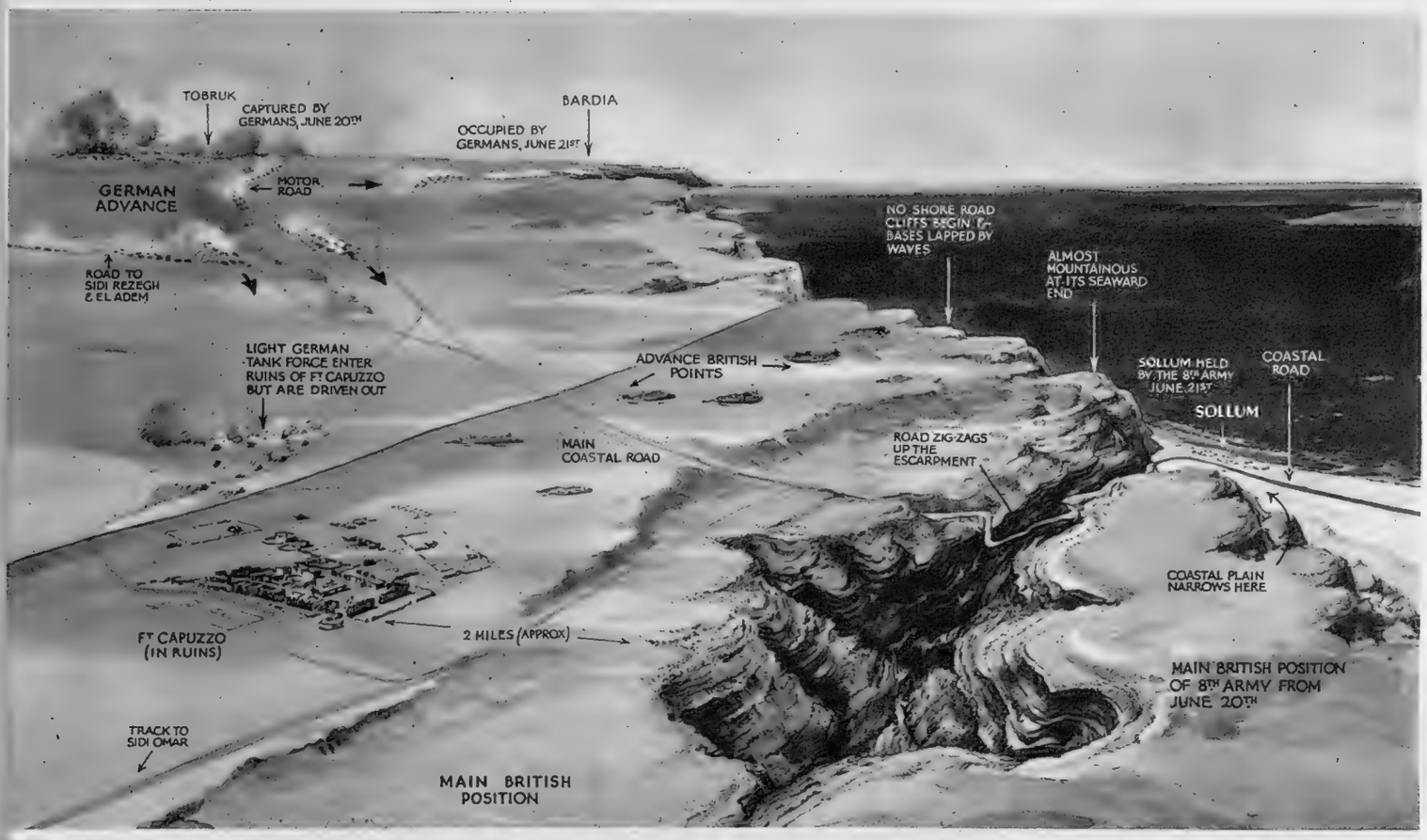
In spite of this disability, the German armoured forces were battered so hard that they had to retreat. With ammunition almost wholly spent, Rommel retired rapidly to a strong position between Jedabia and El Agheila. Here he remained for a month; on January 22 last he attacked our light containing forces, thrust them back and succeeded in reaching a line stretching from El Tmimi to Mekili. From February 9 to May 27 this line remained static, with a No-Man's-Land area stretching

WHEN TOBRUK WAS HELD BY THE BRITISH: A sentry on duty in one of the damaged streets of the town during the months when it defied all the enemy's attempts to recapture it

eastward to the British line from Gazala to Bir Hacheim. On May 27 Rommel moved to the attack, bringing his forces to bear both at the north and at the south of the line.

His armoured divisions rounded the latter point and turned towards the north-east. Our own mechanised forces fanned out from their arranged positions to meet the challenge, and for the first four days it was successfully met—partly owing to the surprise of the small number of heavy, American-built "General Grant" tanks. The enemy was sufficiently encircled in what appeared to be an attempt to reach Tobruk to bring about an exhaustion of his vital supplies; he was compelled, therefore, to attempt to break through at a selected point in the chain of wired strong points which lay between him and his advanced supply bases. This he accomplished by weight of metal.

After the creation of his "Gap," further severe pressure by Rommel brought about the fall of Bir Hacheim, and he was then able to press eastwards with such effect that some of his forces reached Sidi Rezegh, while the general pressure against General Ritchie's forces brought the latter into a very awkward situation. The penetration to Sidi Rezegh affected the rear of the 8th Army sufficiently, apparently, to cause the British command to counter-attack in a south-westerly direction. This occurred on June 13, and it appears that the British tank forces ran into an unobserved mass of anti-tank guns, artillery and



4. AFTER THE REMAINDER OF THE 8TH ARMY HAD REGROUPED ALONG THE LINE OF THE EGYPTIAN FRONTIER: The British positions on June 21, when the retirement had been completed and the British forces stood to repel the threatened invasion of Egypt—*Drawing by E. G. Lambert*

tanks, arranged in such a position that they wrought great havoc in our ranks.

The number of British armoured weapons which were either blown up, burned, or disabled was evidently sufficient to bring about a British retreat. A rapid evacuation of the Gazala district followed, Tobruk again became isolated, and a quick retreat to the Egyptian frontier became imperative. It would appear that at no time had the 8th Army a sufficient tank reserve.

The 8th Army was fighting with all it could muster, whereas the enemy seemed to have reserves from which he could quickly draw when hard pressed. A new inflow of fresh, undamaged tanks would have brought about a different result, if introduced into the battle during its successful opening stages. The conflict had indeed become "fluid"; General Ritchie's retreat left the field clear for the enemy to concentrate a massed attack on the perimeter of Tobruk. At this period so rapid was Rommel's advance that neither the strengthening nor evacuation of Tobruk's garrison could be considered. The place was stuffed with supplies, and it doubtless seemed too important to surrender at the moment when luck might possibly change the situation for the better.

The Germans broke through from the south-east, crushing the resistance of the small garrison (25,000 men). This force can hardly have had time to have adjusted itself to all the possible threats against its outer fortifications—cleverly planned as these originally were.

THE PORT AND TOWN OF BARDIA, which the Germans entered on June 21. Its occupation would have been impossible for the 8th Army, as it is so placed as to be very vulnerable to attack from the west. Probably it will now serve Rommel as an advanced base. *On the left* is the **RUINED FORT CAPUZZO,** the Italian strong point which has changed hands so many times. On June 21 the Fort had been occupied neither by Germans nor British

ANOTHER SCENE FROM TOBRUK: Caves where British troops lived during the eight months of siege and of heavy bombardment

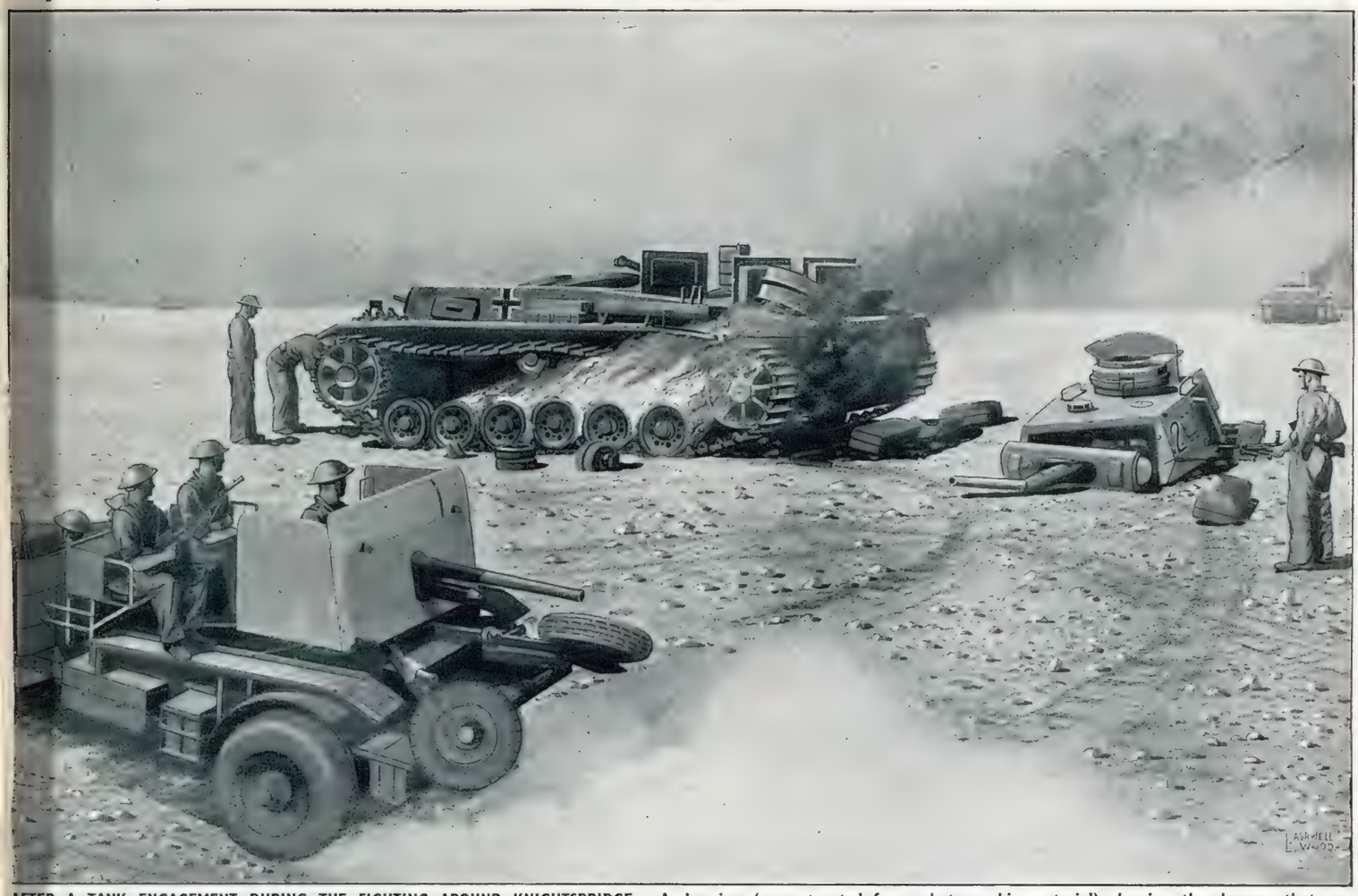
BEFORE THE RETREAT IN LIBYA: Scenes during the Fighting around Knightsbridge and El Adem

QUEER THINGS WERE LIABLE TO HAPPEN DURING THE DESERT FIGHTING: In this case a British transport column passed one of the enemy's columns in the darkness, but neither stopped to challenge the other as recognition came too late—*Drawing by F. D. Blake*

After it became apparent that the Knightsbridge "Box" was untenable, heavy fighting took place in the desert to the south of Tobruk. Columns of tanks, armoured cars, mobile guns and lorried infantry manœuvred for position; sometimes, in the night, columns would run parallel to each other, only realising the dangerous proximity when it was too late to engage. One such moment is depicted above. Very largely, the battles in the desert became battles of supply—and it was necessary for the convoys and reinforcements to get through: for this reason they were heavily defended by armoured vehicles and by lorry-borne infantry

A BRITISH PILOT IS RESCUED BY AIR after his fighter aircraft had been forced down and himself injured. In the desert fighting numbers of our pilots were saved by this and other means, although their aircraft may have been destroyed—*Drawing by E. Byatt*

In one week alone, during the heavy fighting in the desert, no fewer than twenty-three R.A.F. pilots previously reported missing returned to their base—some on foot after crash-landings, some in ambulance aircraft. In this case, the Tomahawk pilot had been forced down, whereupon his aircraft burst into flames: he managed to extricate himself and then awaited the arrival of a rescue plane. When this landed near by, it bore a stretcher on which to carry the wounded pilot. Shortly afterwards the latter was safely back at his base. Other pilots have not been so fortunate, having to walk many miles before being picked up. As a precaution, all fighter pilots now include a rucksack with food and water in their operational equipment, and they wear boots more suited to desert hiking than their normal flying boots



AFTER A TANK ENGAGEMENT DURING THE FIGHTING AROUND KNIGHTSBRIDGE: A drawing (reconstructed from photographic material) showing the damage that can be inflicted against strongly-armoured vehicles by heavy and accurate anti-tank gunfire—*Drawing by L. Ashwell Wood*

In this case a German Pz. Mark III tank has received a direct hit from one of our guns—probably a 25-pounder (the weapon which earned such high opinions from competent observers in the desert), to judge by the damage visible. The turret of the enemy fighting machine has been completely blown off, and its 50 mm. gun barrel cracked in half. Another shell has entered the side of the tank just below the top portion of the track in the rear, causing the fire: some of the "idler" wheels which supported the track may be seen on the ground. In the foreground of the picture is one of our new mobile anti-tank guns mounted on a truck. This can be fired either from the position shown, or it can quickly be slid down the ramps (shown stowed in the drawing) and brought into position on the ground

BRITISH INFANTRY AND ARTILLERY WERE ABLE TO HOLD THEIR OWN AGAINST THE ENEMY'S FOOT SOLDIERS IN THE FORTIFIED STRONG POINTS ALONG OUR LINE: This picture gives an impression of the attempted German assault on the El Adem "Box"—*Drawing by E. Byatt*

It was loss of tanks and armoured vehicles which caused our defeat in Libya, not a weakening morale amongst our fighting men. In fact, the men of the 8th Army were puzzled at having to retreat when they had met and repelled German attacks with great losses to the enemy. Three all-out attacks, for instance, were made against the El Adem "box" in one day by the 90th Light Division: each time the enemy had to fall back after a severe mauling. In the first attack (illustrated above) by infantry covered by an artillery barrage, the infantry were dispersed by machine-gun fire before they were able to penetrate our wire. Later strong tank formations were also broken up by our anti-tank guns. It was when these attempts failed that the Nazis began to dig in all around the position, outside the range of the British guns

COMMANDO RAID

A Description of What it Means to the Men Taking Part and to the Officers who have Planned It

By STEPHEN FARRAR

Commando soldier, with the full intention of placing himself in just such a desperate situation and knowing exactly the true nature of the ordeals he is voluntarily undertaking, calmly prepares and trains for many months to fit himself for the task. He knows, too, that for himself to falter or fail in the part allotted to him may endanger his companions and may bring disaster upon the whole enterprise.

His training is exceptionally arduous, and it goes on all the time in between raids, with plenty of night work to accustom him to act in the dark. Night vision, indeed, is of the utmost importance, and there are stringent optical tests and special eye exercises for Commandos, just as there are for aeroplane pilots. By the time they are adjudged fit for their task they are not only at the very peak of physical fitness, but they are adept at every art of the guerilla, past-masters in the use of the arms they carry, practised in silent embarkation and landing.

Above, and on right—**TWO ASPECTS OF AN ATTACK—from the Commander's point of view and from that of the men—**
Drawings by Harry Riley, R.I.

The upper picture shows the scene as viewed from the bridge of the naval vessel wherein the Commanding Officer has made his Headquarters. Does the alert searchlight mean something in code—or is it just the usual routine? The picture on the right depicts the same critical moment from the point of view of the landing party—are they expected, or will surprise be complete? The sea is quite calm, and the boats are riding in to shore at the scheduled time

NOWADAYS nobody imagines that the Commandos are made up of reckless devil-may-cares spoiling for a fight: unthinking men who are too insensitive to realise the tremendous risks they run.

Tough they must be, and greatly daring, but brave also in the finest sense, for each one knows before ever he sets out that he will go deliberately from the quiet darkness of the night right into a brilliantly lit inferno of fire.

In battle, many a man, faced with a sudden desperate emergency, may rise to the occasion and display high courage, either because he has no time to think fully of his peril, or because his back is to the wall and there is no other way out. But the Commando soldier, with the full intention of placing himself in just such a desperate situation and knowing exactly the true nature of the ordeals he is voluntarily undertaking, calmly prepares and trains for many months to fit himself for the task. He knows, too, that for himself to falter or fail in the part allotted to him may endanger his companions and may bring disaster upon the whole enterprise.

His training is exceptionally arduous, and it goes on all the time in between raids, with plenty of night work to accustom him to act in the dark. Night vision, indeed, is of the utmost importance, and there are stringent optical tests and special eye exercises for Commandos, just as there are for aeroplane pilots. By the time they are adjudged fit for their task they are not only at the very peak of physical fitness, but they are adept at every art of the guerilla, past-masters in the use of the arms they carry, practised in silent embarkation and landing.

Of course, the operations in which they eventually take part have been planned long in advance, for all three arms of the Services must be so minutely co-ordinated as to ensure perfect timing at every phase of the attack. The Army supplies the men; Naval escort vessels protect the troop-laden ships and assault craft, bring them to the place of attack in safety and, punctual to the minute, put out of action the enemy flak-ships and disorganise the shore defences; and in turn, aircraft form an uninterrupted fighter screen for the ships, drop smoke bombs as cover for the attackers and complete the demoralisation of the defenders with low-flying bombers. No such combined operation could succeed without the uncanny exactitude and precision which has marked every Commando raid yet staged.

But there is another ingredient of these operations which is vital to their success—complete secrecy. Only those who are chosen to lead the attack, or those who have some specialised knowledge or ability which must be enlisted beforehand, are told of the raid in advance, or where or when they are going. The party may embark for practice purposes, or may stay awhile on the ship which will carry it to its destination—and then disembark. They are only let into the secret when the ships cast off for their perilous adventure.

On left—**AFTER A COMMANDO RAID: The scene as British Special Service troops landed on their return from the reconnaissance raid on the Boulogne-Le Touquet area recently. Their craft are seen on the left: on the beach are a number of fishing-vessels and pleasure boats.** *A picture taken by the R.A.F. Film Unit*

Everything hinges on surprise, and a chance remark to a friend by way of over-intelligent anticipation on the part of a Commando might be flashed to the enemy, putting him on guard

VARYING TYPES OF CRAFT ARE USED FOR LANDING TROOPS, ACCORDING TO THE TYPE OF BEACH ENCOUNTERED : The "sea sled" type of bow in the craft depicted above would not only assist a landing on a shelving beach, but would also make the craft suitable for use close inshore, with rolling waves coming in. Here the weather has taken a change for the worse, and a heavier sea is running
—Drawing by Wm. McDowell

and causing failure of the plan and the deaths of many brave men. When the last man is aboard and the ships glide slowly out of port, the decks below are closely packed with troops and equipment, and soon the grey shapes of the escort vessels are seen. The men are in battle-dress—changed to shorts for the raid in early June. Some are equipped with Bren guns, some with Tommy-guns. Haversacks and pockets bulge with grenades, and all carry a Commando knife at the knee and wear gym. shoes. It is dark when they near their landing-place and Action Stations sounds. It is when they are waiting for zero hour and the guns open up that the most trying moments have to be endured. Then, keyed up to the high pitch of the deeds that each man expects of himself, the landing craft are lowered and the men jump in and the hazardous venture is on.

Searchlights have passed above the low-lying craft, but pick them out as they near the beach, while the guns of the escort pound the defences ashore. White Very lights illumine the whole terrain the men must traverse, and under a hail of machine-gun fire, with shrapnel bursting all about them, the men cut their way through the wire entanglements and press on, each to his assigned objective. Every feature of the beach and town, or of the port, is known in detail : each knows his part, some to attack enemy headquarters, some to storm fortified points, others to cut around behind the town to prevent escape or withdrawal.

In the town there are trained snipers in every house, rendering progress difficult and slow. With hand grenades headquarters are taken, or the main purpose of the raid achieved, and along comes the demolition squad, their passage punctuated by shattering explosions as munition dumps blow up and works and factories are demolished or set ablaze.

At the withdrawal those who can, walking, limping, or helped along by comrades, assemble on the beach. Anyone who has not made the rendezvous at the time appointed must be left behind to fend for himself.

There are the inevitable casualties—light compared with what has been accomplished. Apart from outstanding examples of specific injury to the enemy, such as the ruin of the oil factories of Lofoten, or the destruction of the great 30-ft. thick main dock gate at St. Nazaire, or the damage at Vaagso, all along the German coast of

AFTER THE BOULOGNE RAID : Two of the participants. The man on the right displays a broad chest—because his safety vest is still inflated !

Europe, from Lofoten to Le Touquet, enemy troops are immobilised from the active theatres of war. Hitler is deprived of their help in Russia and in Libya, not knowing where or at what moment the deadly Commandos will strike again.

There are men of all ranks in the Commandos, men chosen for their particular skill or aptitude for their several allotted tasks, or for their knowledge of the language of the locality. In the raid on Boulogne on April 22, many regiments were represented !

The worst part of the raid comes with the withdrawal, when the enemy is left in possession of his battered defences, and those of his batteries and machine-guns still intact rake the beach and the shallows with their fire. Here and there the guns of the Navy shatter a pill-box or a gun emplacement, and a flight of bombers sweeps in from the sea, flying low over the defenders and completing the havoc of the night. The black shapes of the ships loom through the darkness, and Cease Fire sounds as the men wade out, stumbling through the shallows to the flat landing craft.

Away they go, the guns of the fleet directing their parting salvos shorewards, or engaging enemy craft that have come in to harass the withdrawal. Even then the ordeal is not ended, but the men are too weary and too cold and wet to bother about the M.E.s which they are driving off. They have done what they set out to do.

WHEN IT BECOMES TIME TO INVADE : Military police, during Invasion Exercises, with complete equipment, which includes road signs which will be used for the control of traffic after landing on the other side

The TRIUMPH of the AIRCRAFT-CARRIER

MAINLY as the result of the Battle of the Coral Sea and the Battle off Midway Island, it has been made public that the U.S. Navy intends to concentrate in the future largely on aircraft-carriers. Not that the "vulnerable" battleship is to be abandoned: as long as the enemy build battleships, so will the U.S., but plans for "the biggest and best" have been laid aside, at least for the present.

(Continued below on right)

As dusk falls, the searchlight crews of H.M.S. "Illustrious" switch on for a brief test

Illustrious is of the same class as *Victorious*: she is the aircraft-carrier which beat 200 bombers in the Mediterranean. This improved version of the *Ark Royal* put up a show against Axis aircraft in January of last year which thrilled the world. She was attacked at high-level by dive-bombers and torpedo-droppers, but brilliant ship's organisation, fine seamanship, first-class gunnery and cleverly-designed manœuvrability saw her through to Malta, triumphant but bomb-blasted and battle-scarred. After leaving Malta she reached Alexandria under her own steam. One 1,000-lb. bomb hit her and eighty of her men were killed—but she was still fighting. Then the news came that she had reached the U.S. for repair. Now *Illustrious* is back once again in the war zone, ready to do her part in the fighting with the rest of the Royal Navy

***Below*—A fine impression of the aircraft-carrier "Illustrious" silhouetted against the setting sun**

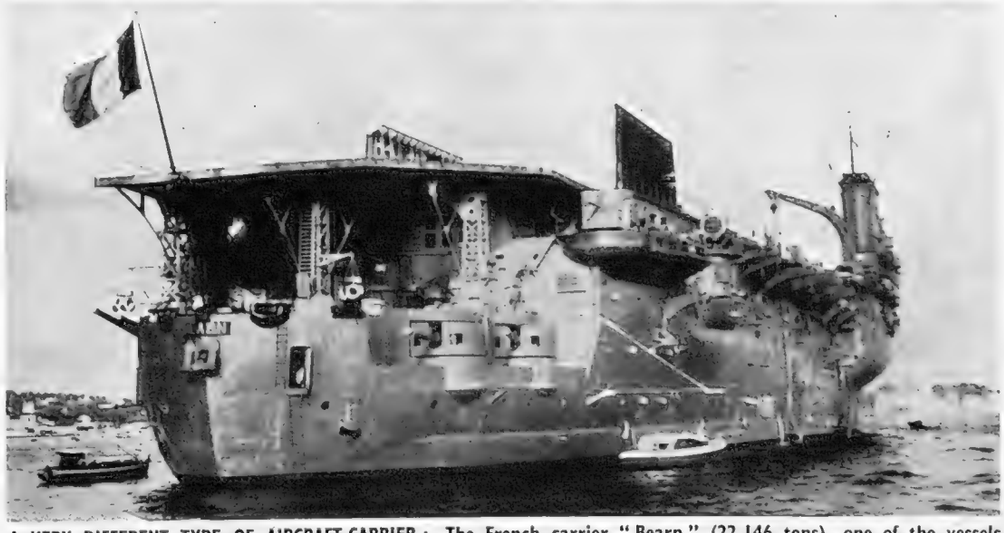
BRITAIN'S LATEST AIRCRAFT-CARRIER NOW IN SERVICE WITH THE ROYAL NAVY: H.M.S. "Victorious," of 23,000 tons, with two of her attendant destroyers and with some of the Albacore aircraft flown from her deck—*Drawing by Montague Dawson*

(*Continued from left above*)

Thus, in the recent colossal programme just passed by the House of Representatives, provision has been made for 500,000 tons of aircraft-carriers, 500,000 tons of cruisers and 900,000 tons of destroyers and destroyer escort vessels. The aircraft-carrier has replaced the battleship as "the backbone of the Fleet," according to the Chairman of the Naval Committee; and the new U.S. building programme aims to outstrip all other nations, including Britain, in the production of the carrier type in all its variations.

The three Powers which concentrated most on aircraft-carrier development during the years immediately preceding this war were Britain, the United States and Japan. And all three have operated these big craft to great advantage in the various naval operations on which they have embarked.

The drawing by Mr. Dawson above shows one of our latest and best vessels of this type—H.M.S. *Victorious*, of 23,000 tons. She is of the *Illustrious* class and was ordered in January 1937, begun in May of that year and completed in 1940. She has a length of 753 ft. and a beam of 95 ft.; her armament consists of sixteen of the new 4·5 dual purpose guns. A complement of 1,600 is carried, and the huge vessel has a speed of 32 knots.



A VERY DIFFERENT TYPE OF AIRCRAFT-CARRIER: The French carrier "Bearn" (22,146 tons), one of the vessels immobilised at Martinique, in the West Indies. This vessel was laid down as a battleship in 1914, but redesigned in 1923 and refitted in 1935. She is capable of accommodating 40 aircraft: her maximum speed is 21½ knots, and her radius of action about 6,000 miles

1. A NAZI TRAP WITH BRITISH AIRMEN AS THE BAIT: "One of the men" in the dinghy "cheerfully waved a small flag" as a British Hudson spotted them from above—(*see notes in box at right*)

Although they knew they were speeding straight into an enemy trap, two R.A.F. launches recently carried out a daring rescue within sight of the Dutch coast. The "bait" of the trap was a rubber dinghy containing the crew of a Halifax which crashed into the sea on its way back from the 1,000-bomber raid on Essen. The jaws of the trap were lurking E-boats and Messerschmitt fighters.

The six men in the dinghy were first spotted by an Air Sea Rescue aircraft. For the next two days a succession of aircraft and launches searched for the dinghy. When it was again located two high-speed launches set out: when 20 miles off the Dutch coast they were sighted by a German plane, but did not open fire. "Shortly afterwards we sighted the dinghy," said one of the captains. "We began transhipping the airmen—a long job, as one of them had both legs broken. Three Messerschmitt 109s swooped down on us, but they did not fire. All they had done was to report our position. We had just got the six men aboard when we saw five heavily-armed E-boats appear. They had positioned themselves between us and England, and came in in line abreast. At 50 yards they opened fire. There was only one thing to do—go straight through their line. We opened up the engines to full throttle and charged at them.

"We battered right through the formation while they were still blazing away at us. We did not fire a shot, but they did not seem to like us coming for them. . . . They did not so much as scratch my paintwork. . . ."

RESCUING AIRMEN from the SEA

How the Work is Carried Out by the R.A.F. in Co-operation with the Royal Navy

Described by E. MARSHALL

"FROM all these operations three of our aircraft have not returned; but the pilots of two are known to be safe." Listening to the Broadcast news, millions of the British public are familiar with such announcements; they have, indeed, become so much a matter of daily occurrence that many people have come to accept them unthinkingly, guessing only vaguely at the stories of hazard and endurance that lie behind the stereotyped phrases. Yet a glance behind the scenes would reveal to the inquiring mind one of the most perfectly working organisations for saving life that war conditions have brought about. It is to the Air Sea Rescue Service that, it is estimated, a proportion of three out of five airmen whose planes crash over the sea owe their lives.

The Service, under the Directorate-General of Aircraft Safety in the Air Ministry, is run by the R.A.F., with the co-operation of the Royal Navy. By day and night it patrols home waters and the Channel in constant readiness to pick up stranded airmen of all nationalities; and so that there shall be as little risk to life as possible, it maintains and keeps ready a number of Rescue Floats anchored in the Channel, and a large number of lighted buoys nearer inshore, which are fitted with ropes and ladders and contain first-aid boxes, iron rations, distress signals, drinking water, torch and whistle and a yellow flag—yellow being the colour most easily seen at sea.

2. A NAZI TRAP: "Three Messerschmitt 109s swooped down on us, but they did not fire. All they had done was to report our position." Later came the attack by surface craft

The Air Sea Rescue Floats—the most important of the many life-saving devices—are rectangular craft about thirty feet in length. They are painted in broad bands of red and yellow, with Red Cross markings prominently displayed to port and starboard. They are not unlike small house-boats, built with the stern sloping into the water and a hanging ladder so that they can be easily boarded by exhausted men, and the sides are raised to give protection from cold winds in the case of men too weary and battered by the sea to be able at once to seek the shelter and comfort which await them in the cabin below deck. Everything that a man can need is provided in the floating temporary home, which can house in comfort at least six men, and contains bunks, sleeping-bags, washing-gear and complete changes of underclothing, as well as a primus stove, provisions of all kinds, spirits and drinking water in plenty. The floats are, in addition, fitted with wireless transmitters or other means of signalling, and within a very short time R.A.F. or Naval launches are speeding up to take the men to land. Often tugs—in pre-war days so familiar a sight to Londoners—are used for this work, and many of them carry searchlights.

From the moment he safely reaches a Rescue Float, a distressed airman's immediate troubles may be said to be over, but, of course, there are many whose planes crash far out to sea and in bad weather: for these there are other devices to enable them to survive until the planes of the Air Sea Squadron, which are always on the watch for airmen who have been forced down, have seen their signals and come to the rescue. Among these, there is the old amphibian plane the Vickers Walrus, which has been invaluable in this work in conjunction with the Westland Lysander reconnaissance planes, the latter well adapted for spotting floating objects at sea.

The problems confronting a bomber crew and that of a fighter plane are, of necessity, somewhat different, and both crews undergo an intensive and careful training in the use of the emergency equipment they carry. Each man's actions must be planned beforehand and timed almost to a split second. In the case of bomber crew, each man has his own allotted part to play in launching and equipping the dinghies; for instance, it is the duty of the wireless operator to see that all secret papers are destroyed and that Very-light pistols

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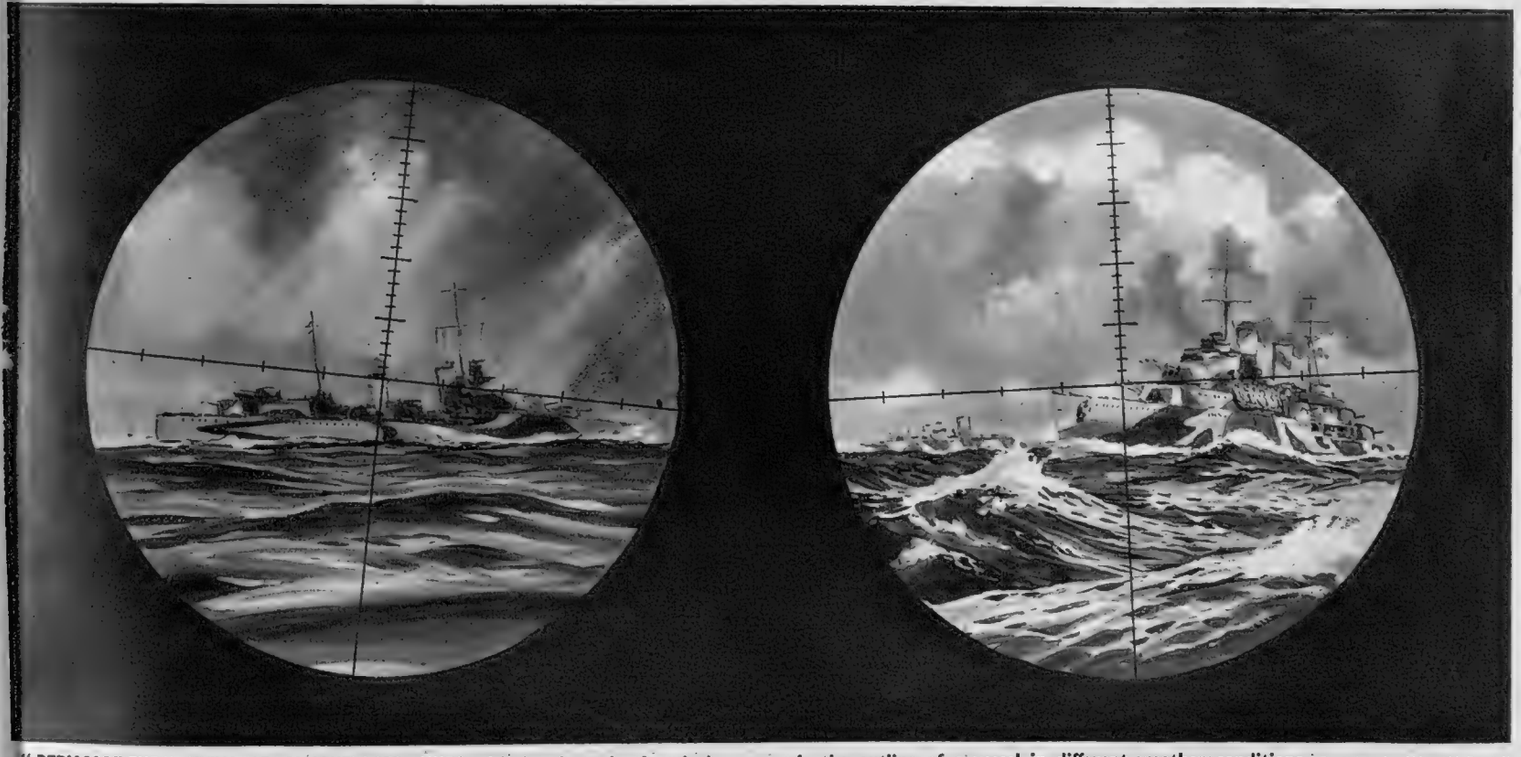
A SUNDERLAND FLYING-BOAT ATTACKS AN ITALIAN U-BOAT. As its depth-charges exploded, the submarine was lifted high out of the water: it fell back into the white foam, unable to move or to submerge—*Drawing by Roland Davies*

The Italian U-boat which, according to reports from Spain, has been beached near Santander, had been previously attacked by Coastal Command aircraft when on the way to its hunting-ground in the Atlantic. It had left the French coast—probably Bordeaux—a few hours before it was found and damaged by one of a number of aircraft engaged in the watch on the Bay of Biscay. This is the U-boats' route to the Atlantic, a 500-mile-wide highway which is patrolled every day and night by aircraft of Coastal Command. The news flashed back that a U-boat had been winged. Quick consultations took place between high officers of Coastal Command and the Admiralty. In a short time more aircraft were on their way to look for the U-boat. The chase was up and the hunter was now the quarry. A Sunderland of a Royal Australian Air Force Squadron found it. It was obviously damaged—it could not submerge. The crew were at their heavy gun on the deck, ready for the attack which they knew would come. They opened fire as the Sunderland came out of the sun, and hit it in the hull. The air gunners replied, sweeping the deck with their bullets and churning the sea into a spray which almost hid the U-boat. The flying-boat swept overhead, lobbing off its depth-charges as it passed over. A tremendous explosion by the stern of the U-boat covered it in foam. As it subsided the Sunderland crew saw their prey zigzagging at greatly reduced speed. A few minutes later a second Sunderland arrived. The crew of the U-boat were still manning their gun, trying to stave off another attack while their engineer made desperate efforts to get the ship submerged. They hit the Sunderland in the tail as it went in to attack, but the captain kept on his course and dropped his depth-charges right alongside the U-boat. The explosion lifted the U-boat high in the water. It fell back into the white foam, unable to move or to submerge. The first Sunderland had already left because fuel was running short, and as the second Sunderland was circling the U-boat an Arado 196 seaplane came to the assistance of the damaged submarine. The Sunderland's rear and midships gunners poured their fire into it, and the seaplane turned tail and disappeared. The U-boat was still stationary when the second Sunderland, with fuel getting low, set course for base a few minutes later. Contrary to foreign radio reports, both Sunderlands returned safely



"PERISCOPE-EYE" VIEW OF CAMOUFLAGED SHIPS, showing how dazzle-painting conceals the outline of a vessel in different weather conditions—*Drawing by Wm. McDowell*

On the left is a camouflaged destroyer as it would be seen from the periscope level. The line of the periscope is only a few feet above the surface, consequently the observer would see a belt of foreground water. In rough weather, the vessel under observation frequently goes clean out of vision as an intervening wave arises. The day is dull and overcast in the sudden rainstorms; the camouflage makes the outline of the ship difficult to range accurately. In the view on the right is a cruiser, with a corvette in the background. The day is bright, with a stiff breeze and with the sky broken by cloud: the light patches of the latter and the white wave-tops combine with the irregular patches of camouflage: together, these things make a moving pattern which renders not only the outline of the ship, but also its direction and speed, difficult to estimate. Note: the crossed lines seen through the periscope are intended to help the submarine commander to "centre" his target. The graduation marks on the vertical line help to estimate the distance by height; those on the horizontal line to estimate the speed

WHEN THE COUNTRIES OF EUROPE ARE "DE-OCCUPIED"

A Little-known Work which is now Actively Going On in Britain to Prepare Refugee Women to Assist in the Rehabilitation of Their Own Countries After the Expulsion of the German Invaders

Described by CHARLES GRAVES

THE strangest classroom in London is on the third storey of a big building in Bloomsbury. The students are women between the ages of twenty-three and fifty-one. Only one of them is English. For this is the special Social Welfare course for Allied women. The purpose of it is to fit them for the emergency reconstruction in Europe after the war. They are being taught how to run hostels and camps for the homeless; how to handle famine-ridden, cholera-ridden, plague-ridden, or typhus-ridden areas. It teaches them how to make homes for children; it tells them all the details of communal feeding and general emergency social services. (This includes the organising of bureaux for missing people, getting them rehoused when found and then getting them settled in.)

After the last war, it was Britain and the United States who jointly patched-up war-torn Europe, mostly through the Society of Friends. This time the Allied Governments have expressed a preference to do this reconstruction themselves, and all supplies will be administered through the individual Governments.

It is expected that at least two or three years will be necessary to achieve even temporary patching up of social conditions on the Continent after the Armistice. During the last war there were no mass slave-gang movements into German factories from the overrun countries. So far, in France, of course, there has been infinitely less damage done than during the last war. That also holds good with Belgium. But if the German armies are going in the opposite direction, it is probable that conditions will become as bad as ever.

The movements of population is well illustrated by one of the women attending this class. Her husband (when she last heard of him) is in Bucharest, one child is in New Zealand, another is in Sweden and the third in Scotland.

These women students have all been selected by their individual Governments. Half the fees are paid by the latter, and half by the British Council. The course, which clearly assumes a second front in Europe during 1942, began on June 1, and continued until July 1. It is likely to be the first of several. The organiser and director of studies is Miss Eileen Younghusband, J.P., daughter of the famous explorer, Sir Francis Younghusband. She herself was formerly tutor in the Social Science Department of the London School of Economics, and is Training and Public Relations Officer of the National Association of Girls' Clubs.

The course includes twenty-one lectures on conditions of physical health. These are sub-divided into housing, clothing, principles of dietetic malnutrition, emergency kitchens, field-kitchens, camp-kitchens, health needs of expectant, lying-in and nursing mothers, school children, adolescents and old people. There are twenty-four lectures on conditions of mental health, which will be given by expert psychiatrists and lecturers in educational psychology. Another twelve lectures are devoted to the social services of the Allied countries; another nine are on the principles of relief work, and six more on emergency social services. There are also six on delinquency from a lecturer in criminology; and three, oddly enough, on the problems of leisure. (I doubt whether there will be much time for that in Europe immediately after the war.)

Perhaps the most interesting lecturer is Dr. K. W. C. Sinclair-Loutit, M.A., A.R.C.S., M.R.C.P. He is Medical Officer for Civil Defence in Finsbury, and had first-hand experience of all the immediate results of war—in Spain. Very few English doctors have had direct experience of typhus, for example. Most of them only know it from the textbooks. One of Dr. Loutit's first tips to his students is that, when the tide of war has rolled back, the local barber should be contacted first. For the barber can cut everybody's hair immediately (this is in the event of an epidemic of typhus), and will presumably know all the local personalities.

It is not suggested that these women will be actually camp followers, though several of them are pretty enough to be *vivandières*. They will come up with the first supplies after the Armistice. It is a nice question what their individual reception will be from their compatriots who stuck it out on the spot, either voluntarily or compulsorily. Nobody knows the answer, but one can presume that, if they bring the vital food supplies and medical supplies, they will be welcome. Even then there may be some suspicion directed at them, if only because of the experience of the civilian population in Belgium after Belgium had been overrun. A German organisation called the "Grey Ladies" appeared on the scene, and at first seemed to be helpful in various ways. Soon, however, it was discovered that it was nothing less than an organisation for luring away Belgian girls from their homes.

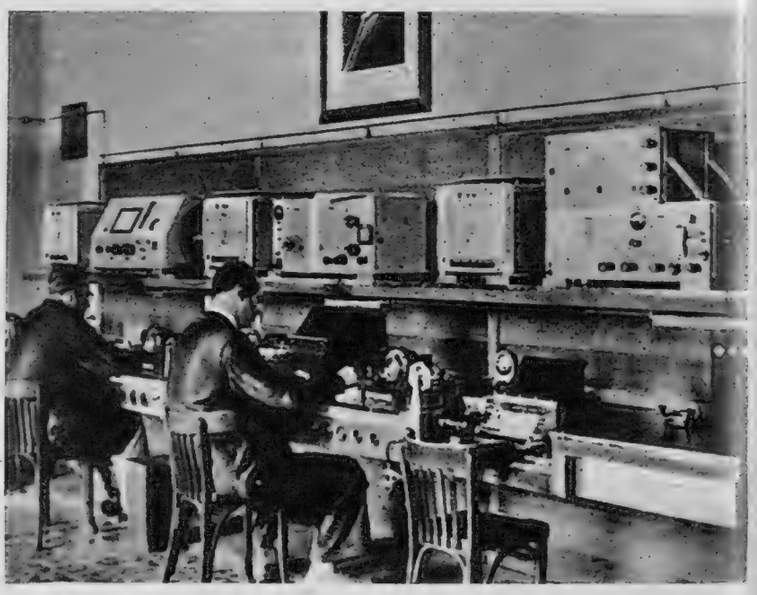
There is no doubt that the state of communications will vary greatly in different countries immediately after the Armistice. If there is fighting on the Western Front, local conditions from Narvik to Biarritz may well become disorganised. Apart from this, the social services in different European countries vary sharply. Czechoslovakia was one of the most enlightened countries on the Continent, their social services were first-class, and it is presumed that, though the Germans have taken them over, they are still in good running order. By contrast, there were never any social services, as we know them, in Greece. Incidentally, that is where the one English student is detailed to go after the Armistice.

In addition to lectures, the students are sent out on visits of observation every Wednesday. They go to the big general hospitals, and have their internal economy explained; they are taken round a complete district, and see all the crèches where working mothers leave their babies; they have the details of half-way houses (temporary hostels for homeless people) explained to them; they are taken over cleansing stations, and taught the horrid art of de-lousing. Some of the most important places they visit are the hostels for difficult children. It is known that in Yugoslavia alone there are thousands of children who fled to the woods, and have automatically become real little savages.

Lengthy and concentrated though the course may be, there are never any absentees, and nobody arrives late for lectures or tours of inspection. The students are pathetically grateful for this opportunity of learning how to rehabilitate their countries when the war is over. It gives them something worth while to do, and takes their mind off their own family anxiety. Scarcely one of these women knows where her family is. Some know that their children and other relatives have been transported bodily into Germany or the Arctic, as the case may be.

I can show you no photographs of the students. They have a fantastic fear that reprisals might be taken against their families in the Occupied territories by the Germans if it was known that they were taking these classes. Even in the case of the woman with three children in different parts of the world I have had to alter the names of the countries in which they are now living, but I can assure you that the actual ones are at least as remote as those which I have substituted. I can say, however, that one of these foreign women had experience of social welfare in Poland after the war of 1920; that another was brought back from the Lofoten Islands by the Commandos; that another (a doctor) was with the Poles in Norway, and won a decoration there; that another was a manicurist in Czechoslovakia, secured a job here as a garage hand and is now a manicurist once more. All of them produce notebooks and scribble furiously as soon as the lecturer starts. The French contingent have been coming only to the evening classes, because they were doing a camping course, having been militarised and assimilated into the A.T.S.

In conclusion, psychology plays a very big part in the syllabus. Heaven knows what mass hysteria will have to be handled on the Continent, as each country is successfully de-occupied. Bombing, shelling, famine and plague are likely to have left the unfortunate civilians in a state more than bordering on the mental, at least for the time being. It is an ugly thought, but at least the British Government, through the Inter-Allied Committee, intends to do everything it can in the most sensible possible way to alleviate the suffering of Hitler's victims.



HOW A SPECIAL BUREAU AT THE VATICAN TRACES AXIS PRISONERS OF WAR: With only a very few neutral countries now left, the Vatican is playing an increasingly important part as the centre of a world-wide organisation for tracing Italian prisoners and missing Italian nationals. The picture above shows priests at work amongst the filing cabinets in the Vatican Bureau; that *on the right* shows the Telegraph Office in the Vatican City: day and night, hundreds of messages are sent out and received by this means. The Vatican Bureau is one of the last remaining channels by which the Axis can communicate with the outside world in the matter of prisoners

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this publication should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export

The Shaftesbury Homes and "Arethusa" Training Ship

More pleasing news has been received of Old Boys by this Society. One was recently invested with the British Empire Medal; two more have been awarded the D.S.M.; a Newport Market Army Bands School boy is now a Chaplain in the A.I.F.; a Fordham House boy has a commission in the Royal Corps of Signals; and so the list grows. Please send a gift to support so grand a work. Headquarters address: 164, Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.C.2.

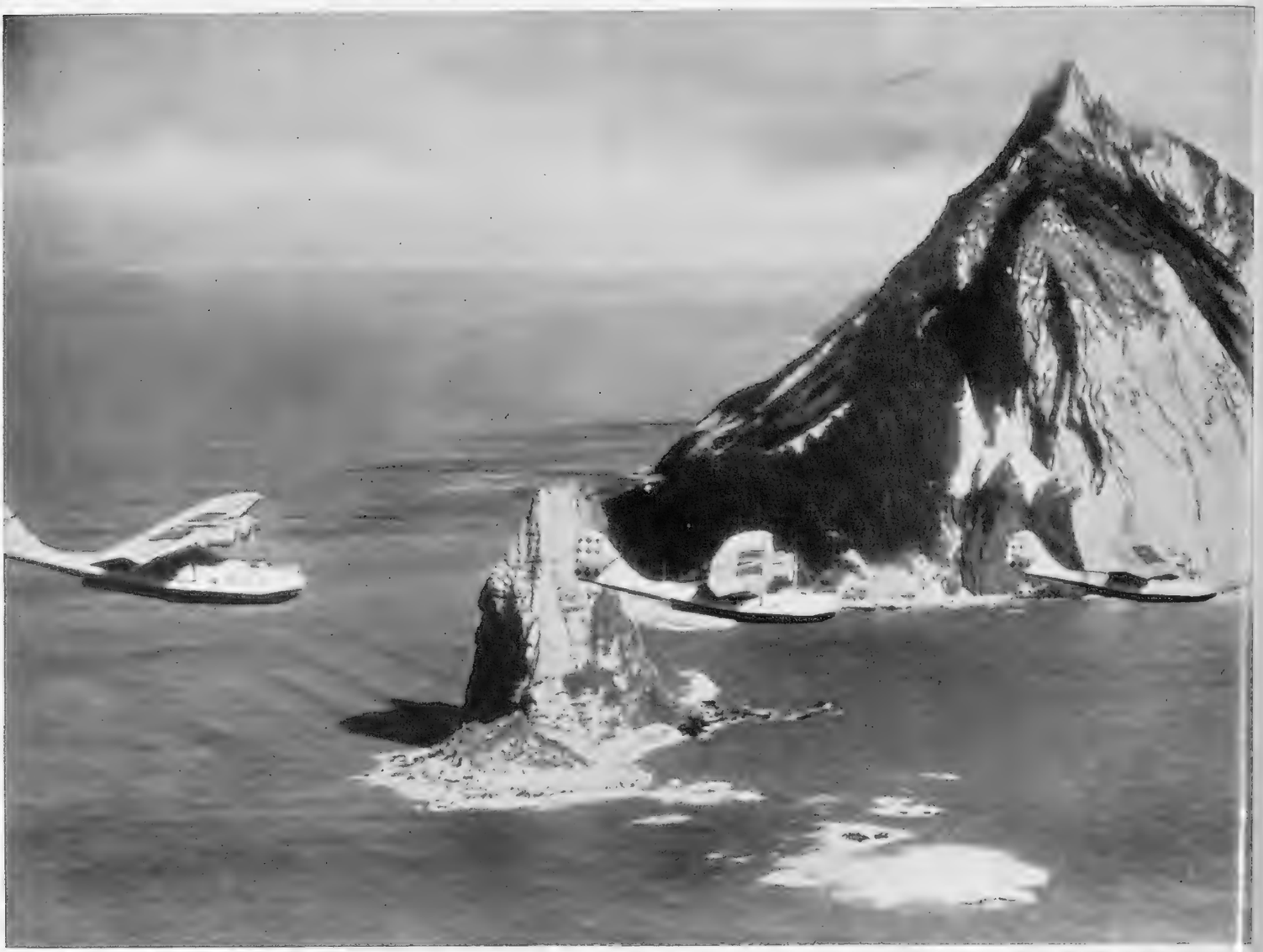
The JAPANESE ATTACK PORT DARWIN by AIR

A UNITED STATES TROOPSHIP HIT BY JAPANESE BOMBERS during an air attack on Darwin, in Australia: The "Meigs" (in centre of the view) is on fire after being hit by bombs during an air raid. To the right of the "Meigs" (through the lines of the ship in the foreground) is the "Moana Loa," a vessel of the Matson Line, which was also hit, and sunk, shortly after this picture was taken

THE SMOKE COLUMN AT THE LEFT MARKS THE BLOWING-UP OF AN AUSTRALIAN SHIP, said to have been loaded with mines, after suffering a direct hit from one of the Jap raiders over Port Darwin. In the foreground, a U.S. destroyer can be seen making for the doomed vessel to pick up any survivors. At the far right is a British vessel on which another fire has been started

SMOKE FILLED THE AIR ABOVE DARWIN FOR HOURS AFTER THE RAID BY JAPANESE BOMBERS. Amongst the victims of the enemy's bombs were the blazing British freighter on the left and the Australian merchantman on the right. Both vessels later sank to the bottom of the Bay. Darwin is a key point in the defence of Australia; it has, therefore, been subjected to severe and continuous attack by the Japs during recent months

AIR PATROL OVER ALASKA: And other Pictures from Various Theatres of War



U.S. PATROL PLANES ON WATCH FOR JAP RAIDERS OFF ALASKA: A new picture just received from America by radio which shows three of the U.S. Navy's hard-working Consolidated Patrol bombers winging their way past Cape St. Elias, on the south coast of Alaska. Fog and mist abound in this region: the tip of the Cape (on the right) is beginning to be covered by it—an added trial for pilots and navigators

AFTER THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF MADAGASCAR: Vessels lying off Diego Suarez after the operations against the Vichy garrison had come to a successful conclusion. The combined Naval and Military Forces arrived off the island on May 5 and French resistance was broken very shortly after. The island has now been effectively garrisoned, and is ready to repel any Japanese attempt to capture this highly-strategic territory

A REAR TURRET ON ONE OF THE NEW AMERICAN PLANES: Showing how the flexible 50-calibre machine-gun is fitted, and how its bullets are fed through. The turret has been added to certain U.S. aircraft types as a result of British operational experience, so it is stated

THE AMERICAN BROWNING MACHINE-GUN READY FOR ACTION: A 30-calibre weapon, with a tubular device at the end of the barrel to eliminate the flashes when firing. The belt of ammunition is fed from the container on the right, with the empty shells falling into the can beneath the barrel

THE "BIGGEST CONVOY EVER" REACHES INDIA

UNITS OF THE LARGEST CONVOY EVER TO LEAVE BRITAIN'S SHORES SAIL INTO AN INDIAN PORT. So big was the convoy that no single port could cope with all the ships. Not a vessel was lost from this vast fleet of transports laden with powerful reinforcements of men, guns and tanks

TROOPS LINE THE DECKS OF ONE OF THE FAMOUS BRITISH LINERS which sailed in the convoy alongside many ships of the Allied Nations. Later the men were taken ashore in barges. The voyage was without incident

FORCES WERE QUICKLY DISPERSED TO STRATEGIC CENTRES, and these gun crews had just reached their station when the camera-man appeared. Every branch of the Army sent its quota, in addition to thousands of airmen

It was announced in London and New Delhi on June 5 that the largest convoy ever to leave Britain had arrived safely in India without the loss of a ship or a man. It consisted of many famous British liners, as well as ships of Allied nations, and was protected by a battleship and destroyers; the vessels were so numerous that no single Indian port could deal with them, and the convoy was dispersed to various ports for disembarkation. Thousands of troops were landed from every branch of the British Army (including infantry, artillery, mechanised units and shock troops), guns, tanks, motor vehicles, vast quantities of war supplies, officers and men of the Indian Army returned from training in Britain, A.-A. gunners, naval and civil technicians, scientists, doctors, nurses and thousands of airmen

Above and on right—**The tanks were a source of great interest to the Indians, who watched them assemble. Several types of British and American heavy and light tanks, and anti-tank guns, were amongst the equipment**

The World of Books—By Vernon Fane

NEW WORKS BY FAMOUS AUTHORS

John Steinbeck's "Actable" Novel; A Nineteenth-century Romance of New Orleans; Mr. Priestley's Dark Views of the Black-out

I HEAR that Mr. John Steinbeck's new work has been produced in New York almost simultaneously as a novel and as a play, and indeed it is easy to see after no more than the first few pages of THE MOON IS DOWN (Heinemann. 5s.) how little adaptation was necessary for the stage version. It is a dramatic story on paper or on the boards, and it would be absurd to suppose that its author was unaware of its possibilities as he was writing it. All of which would be perfectly legitimate if neither of the two forms of the story had to suffer from this ingenious telescoping. I cannot judge how good a play has resulted, though I imagine that it would be both effective and moving, but I can see, with genuine regret, that the novel has been made more restricted and more artificial.

James Barrie's stage directions were so detailed—and sometimes so fanciful—that one had roughly the same pleasure from reading his plays as from seeing them. John Steinbeck's stage directions are not fanciful. They are not even meant to be recognised as anything but the bread between which his dialogue is sandwiched, but their mechanics are apparent for all that. You will see what I mean.

"The drawing-room of the palace was very sweet and comfortable. The gilded chairs covered with their worn tapestry stood about stiffly like too many servants with nothing to do. An arched marble fireplace held its basket of red flameless heat, and a hand-painted coal-scuttle stood on the hearth. . . . Beside the fireplace old Dr. Winter sat, bearded and simp and benign, historian and physician to the town. He watched in amazement while his thumbs rolled over and over in his lap. Dr. Winter was a man so simple that only a profound man would know him as profound. He looked up at Joseph, the Mayor's serving man, to see whether Joseph had observed the rolling wonders of his thumbs.

"'Eleven o'clock?' Dr. Winter asked.

"And Joseph answered abstractedly, 'Yes, sir. The note said eleven.'

"'You read the note?'

"'No, sir. His Excellency read the note to me.'"

The story is of a dignified, peace-loving and courageous people, whose country is suddenly and, as it seems, successfully invaded by an efficient army of occupation. Their way is prepared for them by traitors, and their plans laid in the smallest details. No nationality is ascribed to them or to their victims by the author, but the analogy of Germans and Norwegians is too clear to miss. The plot is intentionally simple, but the theme is magnificent.

"'Captain, is this place conquered?'

"'Of course,' said Loft.

"A little note of hysteria crept into Tonder's laughter. He said, 'Conquered and we're afraid; conquered and we're surrounded. . . . Conquest after conquest, deeper and deeper into molasses.' His laughter choked him and he coughed into his handkerchief. 'Maybe the Leader is crazy. Flies conquer the flypaper. Flies captured two hundred miles of new flypaper!'"

The people of the country seem to remain quiet, but their bewilderment of the first day soon passes. Things begin to happen. Men slip away into the mountains, and across the sea in little boats. Railways are wrecked, work delayed and delayed. The invaders shoot "examples" in increasing numbers, but there is no change in the stubborn, undemonstrative resistance. Finally, the mayor of the little town goes to his death, very quietly, too, arguing to the last with the doctor about a quotation from Socrates. "The flies have conquered the flypaper."

It is a book to read, principally because it is by Mr. Steinbeck, and because everything he writes has integrity and conviction and, most of all, real emotion. But I think he should have concentrated on one form at a time, and I still want to see that play.

Hundreds of miles away in time and thought is Mr. Louis Bromfield's WILD IS THE RIVER (Cassell. 10s. 6d.), which is a full-dress romance of New Orleans during the Civil War or, as it is traditionally known in the South, the War between the States. Here are desperadoes and swashbucklers and brothel-keepers and beautiful mulattos for you, and to spare. Everything is lavish and a little larger than life, including the plot.

La Lionne, who brushed gold-dust into her hair and drank champagne in her satin bed; Tom Bedloe (one can hardly resist adding Tyrone Power, in brackets); beautiful, hot-blooded and cruel as the city he plundered; Agnes, the fair, shy but indomitable girl from the North—I am sure you grasp the general idea.

The interesting thing about this novel to me, apart from its rather hypnotic readability, is the fact that it is so evidently the work of a competent novelist. Mr. Bromfield can—and does—do this sort of thing admirably, and there is something soothing about the work of a technician so able that he has mastered all the tools of his trade, can use them with a half-careless familiarity and, quite possibly, be thinking of something different all the time. Maybe the film rights.

If Mr. J. B. Priestley were to be told that he had written a spy story rather in the manner of Mr. W. S. Maugham, it is reasonable to suppose that his reactions would not be those of ecstatic agreement. I have often wondered, as it is, what he felt about being called the modern Dickens, but have never seen his printed opinion on this. Still, the fact remains that BLACK-OUT IN GRETLEY (Heinemann. 8s. 6d.), which he subtitles "A story of—and for—wartime," is an unglamorous Ashenden up to date, with a dreary Midlands town substituted for a European background to the secret agent's story.

THE LORD KINDERSLEY, G.B.E., President of the National Savings Committee: Towards the close of the year 1915 two men walked into the offices of the Public Trustee in Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, and surveyed the bare walls of two or three small rooms which had been placed at their disposal for a wartime purpose. From those obscure rooms sprang first the War Savings Committee and then the National Savings Committee. To-day that minute organisation has expanded to a great nation-wide movement embracing 1,275 Local Savings Committees, twelve big regional organisations, well over half a million constantly active voluntary workers associated with some 275,000 Savings Groups, and over 15,000,000 adherents—the holders of Savings Certificates. In all, the organisation during its existence of twenty-six years has been responsible, wholly or in part, for the raising of sums which, in the aggregate, are rapidly approaching the figure of nine or ten thousand million pounds—a truly staggering sum. At the head of the National Committee, as President, is Lord Kindersley, to whose devoted activity over the whole period of twenty-six years much of the credit for the success of the Movement is due. Lord Kindersley is virtually a Minister of the Crown without Ministerial rank or salary. He has served the Committee from the start without any emoluments whatever, and since the outbreak of this war he has given the whole of his time each day

The title is no fortuitous choice: Mr. Priestley inveighs against the hazards and effects of a black-out with all the zeal of the true reformer. "Now I hate the black-out anywhere," says his Englishman, a counter-espionage agent. "It's been one of the mistakes of this war. There's something timid, bewildered, Munich-minded about it. If I'd my way I'd take a chance right up to the moment the bombers were overhead rather than endure this daily misery of darkened streets and blind walls. There's something degrading about it. We never should have allowed those black-hearted outcasts to darken half the world. It's a kind of tribute, an acknowledgment of their power."

It seems to me that this is destined to be a passage that will make its own repercussions.

The story itself is excellent, fast-moving, with no digressions, except perhaps the above, and no time spent on anything but the development of what is, in every sense of the word, a plot. Gretley itself is described as "one of those English towns that seem to have been built simply to make money for people who don't even condescend to live in them." A dreary place, but not without importance, since a big aircraft factory and an equally important electrical company have their works there. A happy hunting-ground, in other words, for Nazi agents, and it is to seek out these murderous gentlemen that Mr. Priestley's agent visits the town. The spies are ingenious—the author must have enjoyed designing their pattern of tricks and disguises—but they are not more ingenious than their tracker, who deals with them in a quietly satisfactory way after a brace of murders have proved, even to the local police, that there is urgent need for action.

The agent—or should it be counter-agent?—is a genuine piece of Priestliana, a vivid and complete character and, apart from his views on the black-out, by no means an echo or a shadow of Mr. Priestley himself. But there is a loose end or two about the story. The reader is told, for instance, or is given the feeling of finding out for himself, just how it is that the spies communicate their secrets to each other, and how their subterfuges are exposed. But he is not told what those secrets are, how they obtained their information, or what use they made of it. This seemed to me a fault of construction in that it lessened the excitement, and in a book of this type surely that should be one of the first considerations?

But there's no doubt that you must read it for yourself to see what I mean.

WIFE FOR THE DURATION (Methuen. 8s. 6d.) is a lightweight among novels, whatever its intention, and I suspect its author of being fairly serious about it. However, Miss Eva Bonner's story of a beautiful pianist who had a liaison, for no discernible reason, with a timid, middle-aged man and then regretted it, is neither memorable nor particularly readable.

Even the accompaniment of a London winter of "blitzes" fails to give it significance, although there is a certain tenderness in the telling of the lady's second-love interlude, which might promise much for a second and less self-conscious novel.

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Reviewed by PHILIP PAGE

It's About Time (Comedy).—This revue is not, as its title may suggest to some people, about Professor Dunne's Time Theory. It has some tuneful songs, without much point, and some sketches which have no point whatever. The best item, I thought, was "The Music Plays," in which that electric personality, Miss Magda Kun, heads a list of clever dancers, including Miss Natasha Sokolova and Mr. Robert Lindon. Miss Ivy St. Helier brought out the pathos of a music teacher, an episode of which she is part-author. The more vital side of this first-rate comedienne was but poorly provided for. Miss Carole Lynne cannot fail to be both charming and clever and Miss Virginia Winter is another "lovely" with brains.

If ever Mr. Ronald Frankau essays a Shakespearean role—which I judge to be unlikely, since the Bard is hardly bawdy enough for him—I would suggest King Leer.

The Mikado (Prince's). — There were rumours that the revival of *The Mikado* was to cause an anti-Japanese demonstration. I noticed no sign of anything of the sort at the performance I attended. For that I was rather sorry, since the situation of a play being officially banned, as this one was some years ago, when it was considered "an insult to our allies, the gallant little Japs," and being howled down to-day as a compliment to our foul enemy, the yellow barbarians, would have been a situation exquisitely Gilbertian.

The important point is that the performance was a remarkably good one, with Mr. Darrell Fancourt as a superb Mikado, Mr. Sydney Granville excellent in his old part, Pooh-Bah (which he played in the recent film), and Mr. Grahame Clifford as a comical Little Ko-Ko.

Mr. Isidore Godfrey is a capable conductor who struck me as having a train to catch.

The Land of Smiles (Lyric).—Mr. Fancourt and Mr. Granville are no more like Japanese than I am, and Mr. Richard Tauber's resemblance to a Chinaman is equally remote. In the case of *The Mikado* this sort of thing does not matter in the least, since it is a comic play. But *The Land of Smiles* takes itself very seriously in certain episodes of its yarn about a European girl who marries a Chinese prince. However, Mr. Tauber's incongruous appearance was atoned for by the excellence of his singing; Miss Josie Fearon is another good singer, and these two helped along a work which is showing signs of wear. Miss Hella Kurty indulged in the comical waddle and upturned forefingers of the conventional stage view of the Chinese, who are actually a dignified people.

It is unlikely that the number sense of primitive man was developed to a greater degree than that of the birds of the air. It is to the contrivance of counting that man owes his progress towards the intricate figure-work of to-day. And counting might never have been invented had not man been endowed with fingers, which served as a primitive calculating machine. Ancient arithmetic books gave instructions in the art of counting on the fingers. For instance the hand held in the position illustrated above indicated thirty, and there were other ingeniously contrived positions for numbers up to 9,000. Strangely enough, man is fast returning to the use of the fingers for calculating, but now instead of positioning his fingers, he is simplifying every sort of complicated calculation by using his fingers to depress the keys of the Sumlock adding-calculator. The manufacture of this machine is one example of the many different ways in which the Bell Punch Company is contributing to the war effort.

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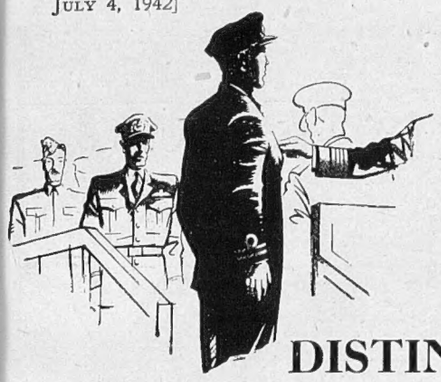

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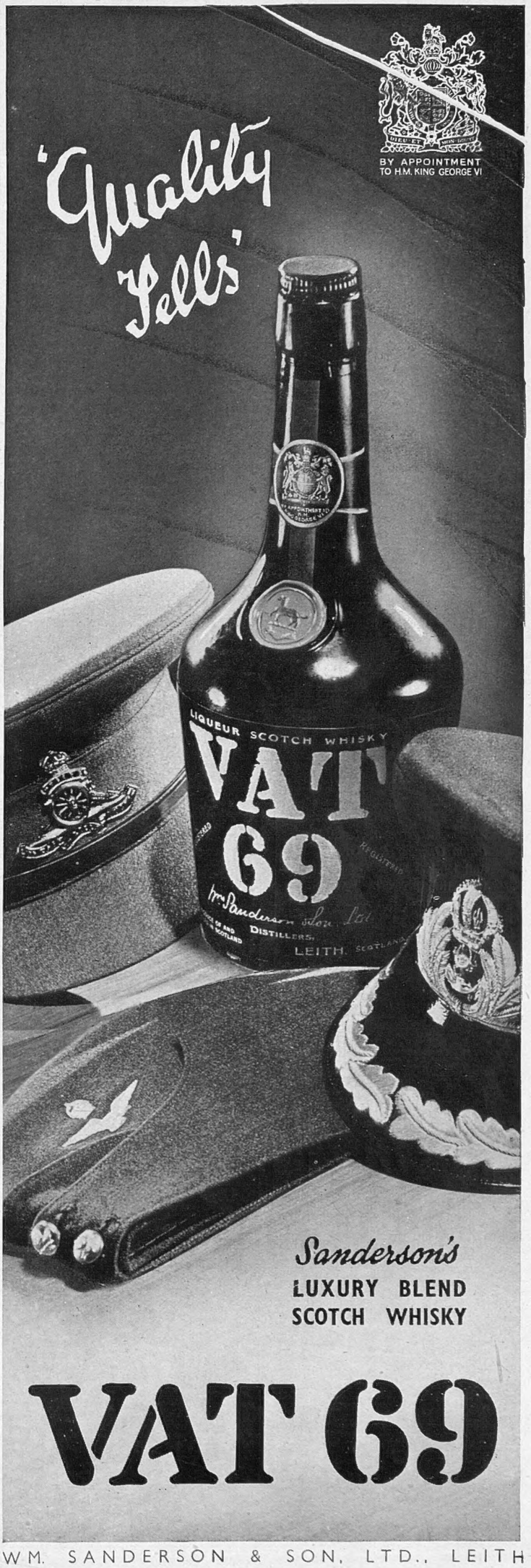

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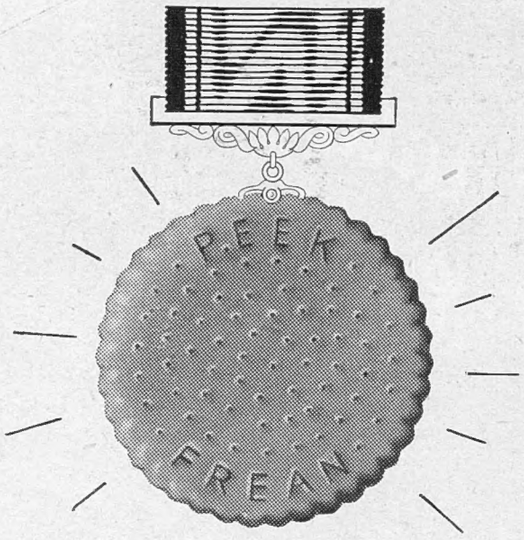

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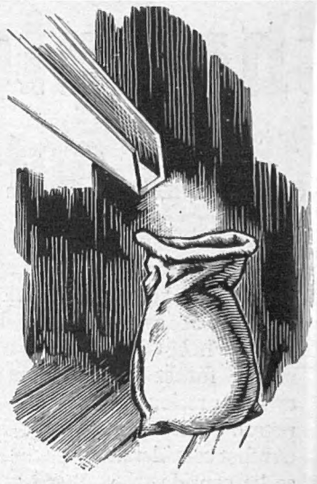

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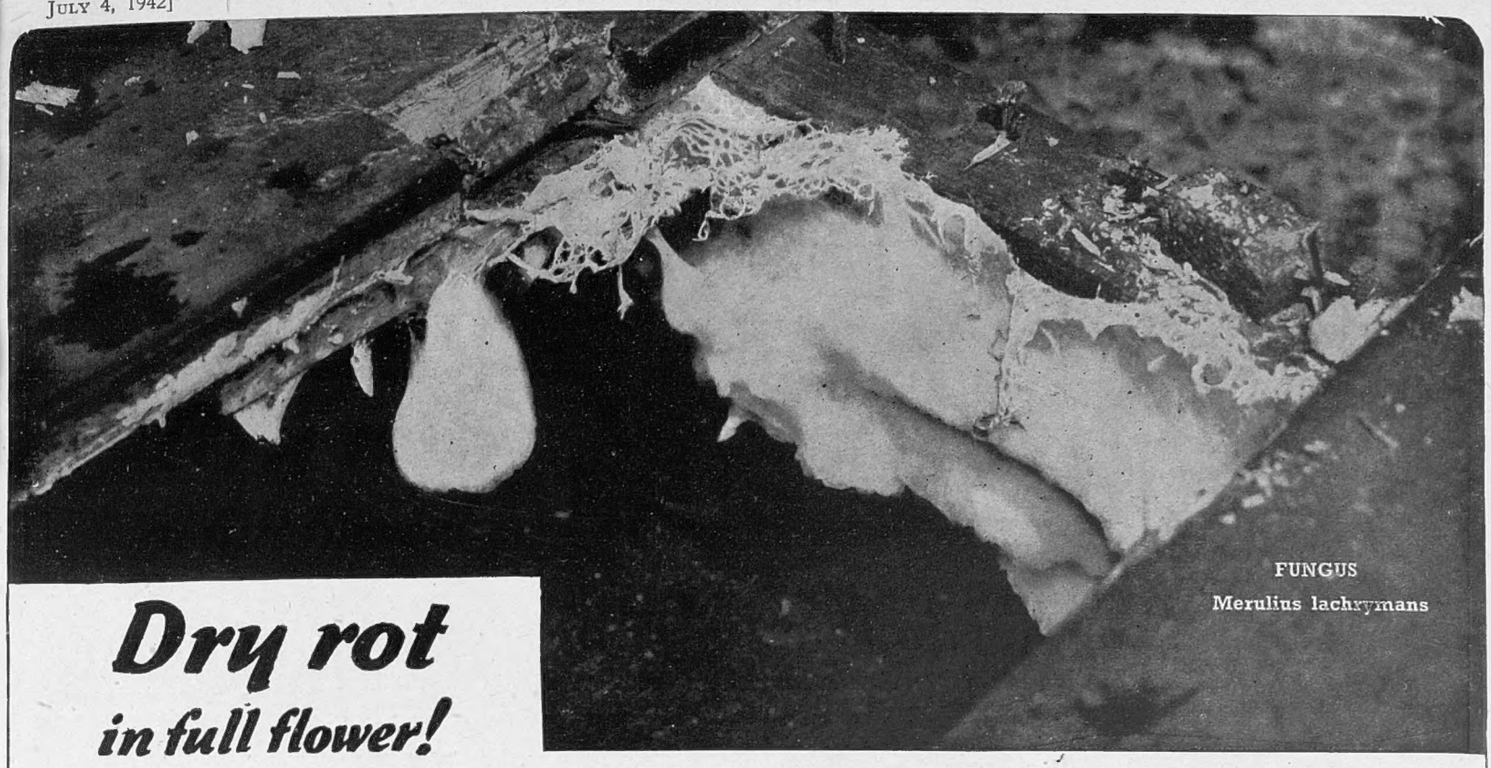

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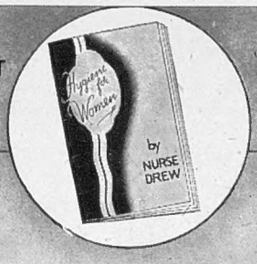

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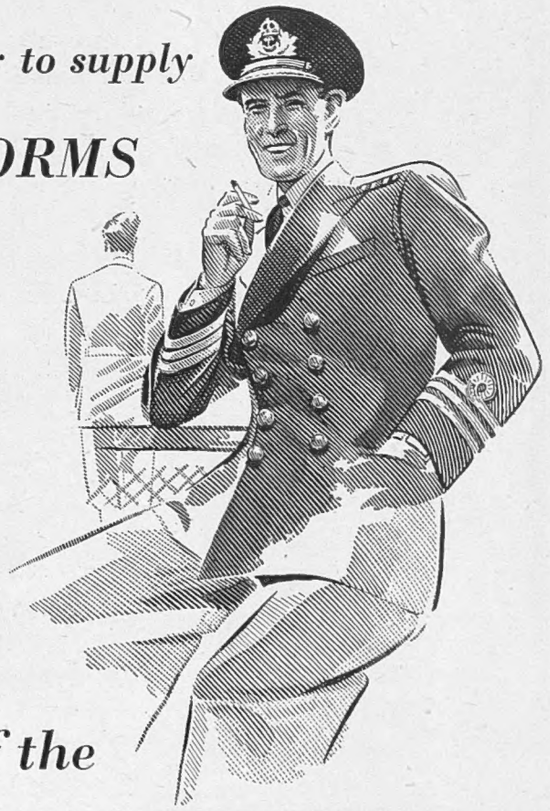

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